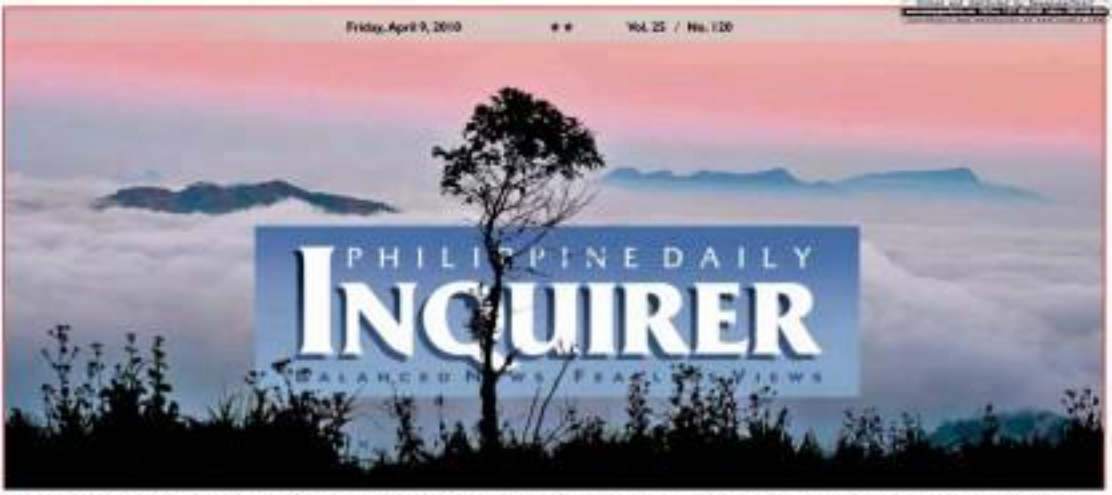
Friday, April 9, 2010 ★★ Vol. 25 / No. 120



FAR FROM THE MADDENING HEAT An early morning drive on Thursday along the Halsema Road in Benguet offers this cool otherworldly landscape of clouds below your feet. The Halsema is the highest road system in the Philippines with an elevation of 7,400 feet above sea level. EV SAPUTI/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Power down, rates up

Dethroned Bicol beauty queen fights for dream

By Ephrain Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

RUNWAY IN RICE FIELD Venus Raj (above) walks on narrow rice paddy dikes in Barangay San Vicente, Ibaloi, Camarines Sur (Below) Venus shows Pili her house made of bamboo roofed with "anahaw" leaves.

BAGO, CAMARINES SUR—Streamers of congratulations still hang in Barangay San Vicente here for its itinerant celebrity daughter, Maria Venus Raj, who would have represented the country in the Miss Universe pageant in August after winning the most coveted beauty title.

But her reign had been cut short by organizers less than a month ago.

"My fight is now more than just chasing a dream. It is about clearing my soiled reputation. It is

DETHRONED A12

Twin whammy hits 4.7M Meralco customers

By Abigail L. Ho

A DOUBLE WHAMMY IS HITTING CUSTOMERS of Manila Electric Co. (Meralco)—brownouts and higher power rates.

Customers of Meralco, the country's biggest power distributor, will have to bear an additional burden of P1.28 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) starting this month, due largely to the huge spike in the cost of power it buys from suppliers.

This means that consumers using 100 kWh a month will see their bill rise by P128, while those using 300 kWh a month will have to shell out an additional P384.

A household in Mandaluyong City that used 114 kWh last month was billed by Meralco P1,155.25.

Meralco had a total of 4.715 million customers in 2009, including 4.277 million residential customers, 424,000 commercial customers and 10,000 industrial customers.

Its franchise area covers 29 cities and 82 municipalities, including Metro Manila. (See area in eight)

The higher power rates come at a time when Metro Manila and other parts of Luzon are suffering from rotating brownouts due to a power sup-

POWER/A13

Rotating brownouts worsen in Metro

By Abigail L. Ho
in Manila
and Yolanda Sotelo
and Elmer Kristian Dasigay
Inquirer Northern Luzon

ROTATING BROWNOUTS TOOK a turn for the worse yesterday in Metro Manila and other parts of Luzon suffered longer outages because a number of power plants were still down, either on maintenance shutdown or due to fuel constraints.

The outages lasted two to three hours, up from just two hours the previous day, in different parts of the franchise area of Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), the country's biggest power distributor.

Its franchise area has a population of 24 million and covers 29 cities and 92 municipalities, including Metro Manila, the entire provinces of Bulacan, Rizal and Cavite; parts of the provinces of Laguna, Quezon and Batangas; and 17 barangays in Pampanga.

Meralco said rotational brownouts were scheduled between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. yester-

ROTATING A10

Smoker in jet triggers US bomb scare

DENVER—A MISHAP DIPLOmat who grabbed a surreptitious smoke in a jetliner's toilet sparked a bomb scare and widespread alert that sent jet fighters scrambling to intercept the Denver-bound flight, officials said.

But no explosives were found and authorities speaking on condition of anonymity said they did not think he was trying to hurt anyone and he would not be criminally charged.

An Arab envoy briefed on the matter identified the diplomat as Mohammed Al-Mufadali of Qatar, an oil-rich Middle East nation and close US ally.

Wednesday's scare came

SMOKER/A6

BATAAN DAY

'Laughter in a funeral parlor'

By Liana Romulo
Correspondent

IF YOU WERE BETWEEN the ages of 15 and 65 anytime from July 1942 to July 1944, pretty much anywhere within the United States, then there's a good chance you witnessed my grandfather—Carlos P. Romulo—on a podium. There were the years he passionately campaigned for the liberation of our homeland, then occupied by the Japanese military, rallying the sympathy of scores of Americans along the way.

His backbreaking, voice-

LAUGHTER/A12

CARLOS P. Romulo at the bedside of his boyhood hero President Manuel L. Quezon in 1944 in Lake Saranac, New York. CORNELIO VICENTE

SC lets Ladlad do what Comelec denied it

By Vincent Cabreza,
Elmer Kristian Dasigay
and Jerome Aning

BAGUIO CITY—VOTING 12-3, the Supreme Court en banc yesterday reversed a decision of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) refusing party-list accreditation to a group representing the Filipino lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) sector.

The Comelec had barred Ang Ladlad from taking part in the May 10 elections on the grounds that it tolerated immorality and offended Christians and Muslims.

But the high court said the Comelec's refusal to accredit the group "on purely moral grounds amounts more to a

SC LETS/A20

'TOXICITY' IN LP CAMP

Noy to Mar, Chiz: Don't focus on battle next time

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

GAINA CITY, NUEVA ECIja—Survey front-runner Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III yesterday called on his lacklustre allies to sacrifice personal ambition in order to realize their common goal of bringing about change through the May elections.

The Liberal Party standard-bearer appeared unruffled by reports that the LP was in turmoil as a result of a power play between his running mate Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II and his kampon Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero for control of his campaign strategy and logistics.

"There might be a battle between Mar and Chiz down the line. But [even if] there is [such] a battle, will you sacrifice the mission we all have at this point in time?" Aquino said at a press conference.

Roxas and Escudero are seen as potential rivals for the presidency in 2016.

"I think I can attest to the fact that everybody is responsible enough to ensure we are clear as to who the real opponent is, and the real problems besetting us. It does us no good to fight future battles within. The battle that is important is the one that leads to a transition to a new

NOY TO MAR/A20

'Jueteng' tip: 8 (Gibo) 5 (Edu) to win big over '1-2'

By Charlene Cepalcyak
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE ASSIGNED numbers on the ballot for administration standard-bearer Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro and running mate Edu Manzano became fodder for

SUSTENTO A20

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

6/45 LOTTO
18 19
30 4
6 12

SUERTRES
4 4 2
6 3 0
7 2 1

6/42 SUPER LOTTO
6 7 4 9 2 3

6/49 LUZ-VIS-MIN
2 11 14 32 34 42
P8,190,320.40

SUPER LOTTO 6/49
9 12 13 21 42 47
P14,303,989.20

LP contests NP-NPC 'bogus' merger

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Leila Salaverria

THE LIBERAL PARTY (LP) WILL APPEAL THE Commission on Elections' (Comelec) approval of what it said was the "bogus" merger of the Nacionalista Party (NP) and Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC), saying that it would leave no "real" opposition party with access to the election results in May.

"One has to question why the Comelec would give access as servers to both administration parties. Isn't that incestuous? We plan to file a motion for reconsideration. There should be parity in the system to have a basis for credible elections," said LP presidential candidate Sen. Benigno Aquino III.

The LP has claimed that the NP standard bearer, Sen. Manuel Villar Jr., is the secret candidate of President Macapagal-Arroyo. Accusing its rivalries, the NPC has been a long-time administration ally, especially in the House of Representatives.

The Comelec, by a 4-to-3 vote, has passed a resolution approving the NP's merger with the NPC. The merger could help the NP in taking the dominant minority party status away from LP. The dominant minority party gets a covered copy of the election returns and access to an electronic server on May 10.

Sen. Manuel Roxas, the LP vice presidential candidate, said the Comelec had approved the merger even though it was made well after the deadline for party mergers, and despite the NPC membership being divided over the issue.

He claimed that the alliance with the NP was undemocratically done by the NPC chair, Prospero De Jr., as claimed by an NPC member, Pangasinan Rep. Mark Cojuangco.

The Comelec itself will has to decide which party is recognized as the dominant minority, but its decision to approve the merger of the NP-NPC will be a factor when it makes its ruling.

Commissioner Lucenito Tagle said the poll body will make its decision after it passes a formal resolution on the NP-NPC merger next week.

The administration's Lakas-Kampi-CMD party is accorded as it is in for the dominant majority.

One of seven copies

The dominant minority gets one of seven copies of the election returns coming from the counting machines. It will also be entitled to two copy of the certificate of canvass, and be allowed one watcher inside the polling precinct.

Other parties will have to contend themselves with getting copies of the results from the Comelec's internet server and with accredited watchers.

The LP has contended that the NP-NPC merger was bogus and was only forged so that the coalition would have one more member of incumbent officials, one of the factors being considered in accrediting a party as the dominant minority.

Tagle said there was no clear finding on this yet, but the matter would be considered when the poll body decides which parties would get the election returns.

He said the Comelec took into account the endorsement of party officials. He had testified in favor of the merger, and reasoned the secretary of NPC member Exalted Secretary that the party's central committee had not been informed of the merger.

Tagle said opponents the LP failed to prove that the coalition between the NP and NPC was a sham.

"They were saying that the coalition is a sham, but during our examination and careful evaluation they could not prove those allegations," he said.

'Right judgment'

Villar said the Comelec made the "right judgment" in recognizing the merger and expressed the hope that the LP would "respect the Comelec's verdict and the fact that the NP-NPC merger is a true alliance and not for show."

Sen. Loren Legarda, an NPC member who is running the vice presidency as a guest candidate of the bill said the merger sets a "big boost" in the two parties' national and local candidates.

Valenzuela Rep. Ben Cunchalera, the NPC spokesperson, said the NP and NPC were confident they would secure dominant minority party status as they had met the criteria—political history, number of members and number of candidates running in the polls.

"The LP believes, but 7,000 deployed candidates nationwide. The joint NP-NPC political coalition will have 10,000 candidates nationwide. That's come very close, in fact, to the dominant majority party which is Lakas-Kampi-CMD," he said.

According to Comelec data, the LP is fielding 5,954 candidates, the NP has 3,360, while NPC has 2,171. With Nikko Dizon and Michael Lim Ubac

A LARGE YELLOW ribbon spearmed with "blood" is held up by students and farmers from Hacienda Luisita on the University of the Philippines campus in Diliman, Quezon City, to highlight the massacre that occurred there since one of the estate's owners, Sen. Benigno Aquino III, is running for president.

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PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO tramps the line on arrival at Hanoi's Noi Bai International Airport to attend the 14th Asean Summit. She was welcomed by Vietnamese Minister of Science and Technology Nguyen Mai Phong (behind her). Ms Arroyo may have returned to the Philippines last night, however, to be with her husband who was discharged from hospital recently. AFP

GMA calls for Asean nautical highway; may cut trip short

By TJ Burgonio and Philip C. Tubeza

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO yesterday pledged to ask fellow leaders at the 16th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit to develop a nautical highway in the region to spur tourism.

Ms Arroyo departed at around 11 a.m. for Hanoi with a host official delegation that did not include her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, who was discharged from the hospital on Wednesday after nearly two weeks of treatment for an acute ulcer.

But the President may cut short her trip and go home tonight because she is concerned about the condition of her husband, according to Press Secretary Cerge Remonde.

Ichiro said that should Ms Arroyo leave early, Trade Secretary Jesli Lapus would take two place as head of the Philippine delegation.

"She cannot take the chance to be with her husband," Ichiro said. He added that there was no medical emergency but said the President might leave Hanoi at 8 p.m.

If she pursues this plan, Ms Arroyo will miss the Asean leaders' retreat session, the dining ceremonies, and a lunch meeting with Vietnamese President Nguyen Minh Triet.

The morning in Hanoi will be the farewell appearance at the Asean summit of Ms Arroyo, who is stepping down on June 30 after nine years in office.

In her departure statement, the President said she would push for the country's interests in the areas of connectivity, climate change, cooperation in sustained recovery and development, and save the migrant workers.

She said she had tasked experts to draw up a master plan on connectivity by the next Asean summit in October.

"I will call on my Asean counterparts to ensure that a nautical highway is developed to make our seaways more connected to the rest of the Southeast Asian region," she said in the statement.

She said a nautical highway would spur economic growth and tourism. She also said that information and communication technology were crucial to the developing the country's connectivity in Asean.

By nautical highway, she was referring to something like the country's RORO (roll-on, roll-off) Ferry Nautical Highway System, which allows travel by car or bus from Manila to Cebu and southern Philippines via ferries, Ichiro said.

Ms Arroyo said she would enlist the support of her Asean counterparts to "speak with one voice" in urging developed countries to take action in addressing the effects of climate change.

Ichiro said that while the Philippines had withstood the "rippling effects" of the global economic slump, she indicated she would ensure that Asean cooperation "in restoring the health of the financial systems."

The regional grouping, she added, would also work toward the "creation of a single market and production base" by 2015.

RP, Vietnam seek 'win-win solution' to China Sea spat

By Philip C. Tubeza

HANOI—VIETNAM AND THE PHILIPPINES have agreed to find a "win-win solution" to their disputes over territories in the South China Sea that they are both claiming, including parts of the Spratly island group, according to Trade and Industry Secretary Jesli Lapus.

According to Lapus, this came up during bilateral talks between President Macapagal-Arroyo and Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung during which they discussed the overlapping territorial claims of Vietnam and Malaysia in the South China Sea, to which the Philippines has transferred its objection.

Malaysia and Malaysia jointly submitted last year a memo on their extended continental shelf claims to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. The notice defined the area that the two countries were jointly claiming.

Lapus said the Philippines objected to the two countries' expansion of their territories and that this was discussed by the President in her meeting with Dung.

"Vietnam agreed, in the spirit of friendship, to sit down and find a win-win solution," he said.

Lapus said Vietnam "agreed to explore and find a friendly venue so that this can be discussed."

"The memo on both sides will also work towards ascertaining that territories in the sea would be maintained," he added.

Ms Arroyo and Dung met for nearly 30 min. utes on the sidelines of the 16th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit, which is being hosted by Vietnam this year.

Pinoys warned about traveling to Thailand

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DFA) warned Filipinos anew against travelling to Thailand following the declaration of a state of emergency in Bangkok on Wednesday and the expected plan of demonstrators to intensify protests.

"Filipinos are advised to postpone all non-essential travel to Thailand, particularly to Bangkok," the travel advisory said.

It said that Filipinos who were already in Thailand had been advised to avoid areas that had been identified as meeting areas for antigovernment protesters, Cynthia Baluma

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- Delamar, Disc Jockey

-Amanda Griffin-Jacobs, Model

Automated voting starts in Hong Kong, Singapore

FILIPINO VOTERS IN SINGAPORE AND Hong Kong will get first crack at the automated election process with the overseas absentee voting (OAV) that starts tomorrow.

According to the Commission on Elections (Comelec), 346,368 overseas Filipino workers (or Idinds' registered) to participate in the May 10 elections.

But only the OFWs in Hong Kong (numbering 95,555) and Singapore (11,011) will experience using the Precinct Count Optical Scan (PCOS) machines. Those in other countries will either have to mail back the ballots sent to them by the nearest Philippine embassy or personally cast their ballots using the manual system at an embassy or consulate.

OFWs will vote only for president, vice president, senators and party-list representatives.

The Philippine posts abroad are ready for the month-long OAV, officials of the Comelec and Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday at a press briefing.

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High turnout seen

They said they expected a high voter turnout, especially in Hong Kong and Singapore.

"Our committees and embassies are well prepared," DFA spokesperson Ed Malaya said.

Comelec Commissioner Armando Velasco, who chairs the OAV committee, said the embassies and consulates would be open for voting on May 8, a day in advance, until May 10.

Said Foreign Undersecretary Rafael Seguis, the DFA assistant chief: "The overseas Filipinos are our new heroes. Beyond their economic contributions and their sacrifices in order to give their families, they are now also given [these political rights through the OAV]. It is high time they exercised the right to vote."

Velasco said 20 PCOS machines would be used in Hong Kong and seven in Singapore.

But the poll precincts in the two countries will be supplied spare machines. The testing and sealing of the machines started on Wednesday.

The results will be counted by the embassy staff members, who will serve as a special board of election inspectors (EBEI), and transmitted to various official servers in the Philippines.

Velasco said the Comelec had sent ballots and other election paraphernalia to the Hong Kong and Singapore posts.

He could not say if all overseas Army voters had been sent to the precincts in the two countries for use of the IRIs in checking security features. But Malaya said the embassies and the consulates had IRI readers available.

Testing grounds

Velasco said the Comelec would closely monitor the voting process in Hong Kong and Singapore, the testing grounds for the procedural and technical aspects of the automated election.

"These are the real elections, not mock elections anymore. We will closely monitor [the process]. We will note down if [the results or not," he said.

Postal voting will be conducted at 44 posts in 133 countries, mainly in the United States, Canada, Australia, parts of Europe and Southeast Asia. At least 1,440,834 voters will use this method.

Forty-seven posts in 39 countries, including those in the Middle East and Europe, will have personal voting, with 300,000 voters participating.

Filipino seafarers, who number 23,897, may vote at the embassy or consulate near their current port. — Kristine L. Alave

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, April 9, 2010
Octave of Easter, Friday

1st Reading: Acts 4:1-12
Gospel: Jn 21:1-14

After this Jesus revealed himself to the disciples by the Lake of Tiberias. He appeared to them in this way: Simon Peter, Thomas (who was called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and two other disciples were together, and Simon Peter said to them, "I'm going fishing." They replied, "We will come with you" and they went out and got into the boat, but caught nothing that night.

When day had already broken, Jesus was standing on the shore, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus called them, "Children, have you anything to eat?" They answered, "Nothing." Then he said to them, "Throw the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they had lowered the net, they were not able to pull it in because of the great number of fish.

Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" At these words, "It is the Lord," Simon Peter, who was stripped for work, put on his outer garment and jumped into the water. The other disciples came in the boat dragging the net full of fish; they were not far from land, about a hundred yards away.

When they landed, they saw a charcoal fire with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you've just caught." So Simon Peter climbed into the boat and hauled the net to shore. It was full of big fish—one hundred and fifty-three—but, in spite of this, the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast," and not one of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" for they knew it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and he did the same with the fish.

This was the third time that Jesus revealed himself to his disciples after rising from the dead.

Commentary:

All right then, did not earth's crying... He said to them, "Throw your net over on the right side of the boat."

It is when we attempt to do it without God that we find fish are not for us, failure, empty.

But when Jesus is the one with the command, the fishing comes like real salvation we do, then life is better full of meaning.

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* Test Conditions:
(1.5 Hp, 23m², 18°C)

Leave Davao, Pastor Q tells Palparan

DAVAO CITY—THE PRESIDICE HERE OF anticommunist party-list leaders, retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan and Pastor Jun Rioveros, is the spark that could set a conflagration and burn down the city, according to television evangelist Apollo Quiboloy.

"Lie low and leave," Quiboloy advised the leaders of the Bantay and Alliance for National Democracy party-list groups.

The tension in Davao City created by tension stands by Palparan and Rioveros on the leadership of Mayor Rodrigo Duterte have recently worsened with the abduction and killing of two of Palparan's political campaigners.

Quiboloy said Palparan and Rioveros were "in danger" who should be "separated and taken out."

"Their positions are very incendiary as they used to live and leave the city. They are making the situation worse. When they were out here, the situation was not like this," Quiboloy told reporters on Tuesday at the Solemn 2010 Vice Presidential Forum that he hosted at the headquarters of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, The Name Above Every Name in Buhangin.

He said that even President Macapagal-Arroyo was getting worried about the situation in Davao. He said the President called him up and asked for guidance on what to do about the fragile political situation in the city.

"I told her that it would be best if we talked with our leaders here. I have also talked to military officials here and gave some suggestions—to take out the initiator," Quiboloy said.

The Davao camp has blamed Duterte for the abduction and death of Juliano Sequena and Ronald Mirando, two of Palparan's supporters whose bodies were found on April 1, 10 days after they were abducted by gunmen.

Duterte said the allegation was absurd, maintaining he had nothing to gain from the killings.

Palparan, who is a candidate for senator, has been dubbed "The Butcher" by rights groups who accuse him of ordering the killing and disappearances of activists and peasants in Central Luzon, Mindoro and eastern Visayas.

—Jeffrey M. Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao

Probe of poll machine for rent sought

VOTING MACHINES FOR RENT?

A lawyer has asked the Commission on Elections to investigate a Comelec official who allegedly rents out Precinct Count Optical Scan (PCOS) machines for P20,000.

Lawyer Al Vitangcol III wrote Comelec Chair Jose Melo and law department chief Ferdinand Rafican accusing Josefa Penitrado, an assistant regional director of the central Mindanao in Southern Tagalog.

Penitrado, in a telephone interview, denied Vitangcol's accusation and said she was prepared to respond to his allegations. She said she had not talked to anyone regarding the rental of PCOS machines.

Vitangcol, in his letter, said his "legitimate company planned to demonstrate to its employees how to use the PCOS machine. But the election officer they invited, Winston Zaldivi of Tagaytay, said he could not bring the machine because it was in the custody of Penitrado.

The lawyer quoted Zaldivi as saying that the PCOS machine could not be released unless rental of P20,000 was paid.

Vitangcol said it was the first time he heard of a rental fee for a PCOS machine, noting that past demonstrations be released at no cost or charge.

"The exorbitant amount of P20,000 for a one-hour demonstration of a PCOS machine reeks of graft and corruption," he said.

—Kristine L. Alave

Seamen's remains found in China

THE REMAINS OF TWO SEAMEN FILIpino crewmen of the Panama-flagged MT Golden Cruz 18 were found by rescuers in China on Wednesday, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said yesterday.

The DFA identified the remains as those of Renard Demadlin and Michael Nargasan. They were found by rescuers in the Yangtze River where their vessel caught fire on April 6. Their families have already been informed, the DFA said.

Reports said the two Filipinos were trapped inside the vessel when an explosion occurred in the engine room Sunday evening. The broke out and spread out of control.

Twelve other crew members—11 Filipinos and one Burmese—managed to abandon ship and board a lifeboat to escape. They were rescued about Monday morning.

The MT Golden Cruz 18 was bound for South Korea from Nanking in China's Jiangsu province to load liquefied petroleum gas.

—Cynthia D. Balana

Comelec: Lowest bidder may not get UV deal

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE AWARD OF A P30-MILLION CONtract for the supply of 80,000 ultraviolet (UV) lamps in OTC Paper Supply was not automatic even though the firm had submitted the lowest bid, according to the Commission on Elections' bids and awards committee (BAC).

BAC chair Maria Lea Alarkon said the committee would submit the name of the winning bidder to the Comelec en banc on Monday.

Right now, the three companies that submitted bids for the project—OTC, Imtra Integrated and Philand Industries...are undergoing the post-qualification process, she said.

This means that the committee is still determining if the bidder conforms to the specifications, Alarkon said.

"If not, we go to the next lowest, always informing the lowest or the next lowest if we will procure them for failure to qualify. [The unsuccessful] is not automatic," Alarkon explained.

The OTC has been at the center of a controversy over the Comelec's audited purchase of 1.6-million ballot secrecy folders worth nearly P700 million, which the poll body has deemed "extravagant."

OTC, which runs the contract to supply the folders, has cried foul over the decision to scrap the deal.

Because of the dispute over the folder contract, Henry Young, OTC Paper Supply manager, said he was considering dropping the company's bid for the UV lamps.

"I don't want another controversy," Young said, adding that he hoped the company would not be penalized.

But Alarkon said OTC could face sanctions if it decides to withdraw from the bidding for the UV lamps.

"It can be disqualified, the bond could be forfeited ... it could also be [barred and blacklisted]," she said.

The company could also be barred from bidding for projects in other government agencies, she said.

Alarkon said the procurement of the UV lamps, which will be used to read the ultraviolet mark that determines the authenticity of a ballot, was an emergency purchase for which the publication of a bid notice was unnecessary.

Still, the BAC decided to publish the bid notice on the Comelec website and on the Comelec premises, she said.

She said the BAC was given the authority to buy the items on March 29, for deployment on April 10.

The committee overseeing local preparations for the items, but none were able or remain in delivering 80,000 UV lamps by the target date, she said.

"You have to put it under emergency procurement because it only a certain amount was available in the market, you won't be able to complete the purchase within the time allowed to the BAC," she said.

The purchase of the UV lamps became necessary after it was discovered that the automated counting machines to be used during the elections will be unable to read the UV marks on the ballots because these were misaligned. The ink used for some of the UV marks was also not dense enough to be detected.

A representative of an election watchdog group in the PNC yesterday said the bidding process for the UV lamps was "imperfect."

Arwin Serrano, of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), said the bidding appeared to have been done in haste as the committee members were not given enough time and documents to study the bidders. *With Kristine L. Alave*

Hik TXT Bobbie Adams, of Longmont, Colorado, talks to reporters about text messages she was receiving from her husband Dhafi Erickson while she waited for him at Denver International Airport on Wednesday. Her husband was among passengers on a flight from Washington, DC, where a Qatari diplomat trying to sneak a smoke in an airplane bathroom sparked a bomb scare. ...

PEDESTRIANS pass by the Embassy of Qatar in Washington on Wednesday. ...

Smoker inside airplane triggers US bomb scare

From page A1

Three months after the attempted terror attack on Christmas Day when a Nigerian man tried to blow up a Detroit-bound airliner. Since then, law enforcement, flight crews and passengers have been on high alert for suspicious activity on airplanes. The scare exposed major holes in the country's national security and prompted immediate changes to terror screening policies.

Two law enforcement officials said investigators were told the Qatari man was asked about the smell of smoke in the bathroom and he made a joke that he had been trying to light his shoes — an apparent reference to the 2001 so-called "shoe bomber" Richard Reid.

Officials said an marshals wrestled the diplomat to the floor and he was questioned. The plane landed safely as military jets were scrambled.

'Massive misunderstanding'

President Barack Obama was briefed about the incident aboard Air Force One by National Security Advisor Gen. Jim Jones and National Security Chief of Staff Denis McDonough, said a White House official. The President is traveling to Prague, where he'll sign a nuclear arms treaty with Russia on Thursday.

A US security official acknowledged "it may have been a massive misunderstanding," telling ABC network that Al-Mahdi may have been making a "terrorist" comment when he was confronted by two air marshals.

The Boeing 757 was carrying 157 passengers and six crew members, said United Airlines spokesperson Michael Trevino.

Qatar's Ambassador to Washington Ali Ibn Fahd al-Hajari said in a statement that the diplomat was traveling to Denver on official embassy business.

"He was certainly not engaged in any threatening activity," the ambassador said. "The facts will reveal that this was a mistake, and we urge all concerned parties to avoid reckless judgments or speculation."

Passengers said they were kept on the plane for nearly an hour after it landed and then were questioned by officials.

Two jets alongside

Passenger Mei Fincstra, 26, of Monrovia, said The Associated Press she smelled smoke about an hour into the flight. She said she later looked out the window and saw two jets flying alongside the plane.

"I'm in the sky a lot, and I was thinking that might not be so normal," she said.

She was angry about having to stay at the airport to be questioned over something so minor.

"We were quietly. There was not a scene," Tavoiia said. "They made this into something that was ridiculous."

Dave Ehrenstein, 55, of Colorado, said his wife, Lauren, was sitting behind the man in the first-class section of the plane. She said she saw the man go into the bathroom and that moments later he said something to the flight crew. After that, two marshals in T-shirt s approached the man and sat next to him for the remainder of the flight.

Ehrenstein said the wife told him it all happened very quietly and that "there was no fisticuffs, no struggle, nothing." She said she noticed nothing unusual about the man before the incident.

Low-ranking diplomat

Another passenger, 61-year-old Scott Smith of Wyoming, said he was waved toward the middle of the plane and didn't notice any disturbance during the flight.

However, he said the approach into Denver was "unusual."

"We came in earlier fast...and we were flying for quite a long period of time," Smith, a computer programmer, told reporters by cell phone. "I've never seen a jetliner do that. There were no announcements, nothing about your carryon bags or anywhere."

A senior state department official said the agency was aware of the sensitive identification of the man as a Qatari diplomat and that there would be "consequences, diplomatic and otherwise" if he had committed a crime.

The latest edition of the department's Diplomatic List, a registry of foreign diplomats working in the United States, identifies a man named Mohammad Naqah Yousif Al-Mahdi as the third secretary for the Qatari Embassy in Washington. Third secretary is a relatively low ranking position at any diplomatic post.

Foreign diplomats in the United States, like American diplomats posted abroad, have broad immunity from prosecution.

Charged or expelled

The official said if the man's identity as a Qatari diplomat was confirmed and if it was found that he may have commited a crime, US authorities would have to decide whether to seek Qatar to waive his diplomatic immunity so he could be charged and tried. Qatar could decline, the official said, and the man would likely be expelled from the United States.

An online biography on the business networking site LinkedIn.com shows Al-Mahmoud Al-Mahdi has been in Washington since at least 2007, when he began studying at George Washington University's business school.

The job title listed on the site is database administrator at Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Qatar, about the size of Connecticut and Rhode Island combined with a population of about 1.4 million people, is situated on the Arabian peninsula and surrounded by three sides by the Persian Gulf and to the south by Saudi Arabia.

The country's base for forward headquarters of the US Central Command, which runs the wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq, and a major supporter of operations directed critical to both campaigns. It also played a prime role in the 1991 Gulf War, which drove Saddam Hussein's forces out of Kuwait. Reports from AP and AFP

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Reinstate reb raps vs clan, gov't asks

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice (DOJ) yesterday sought the reinstatement of the rebellion charges against members of the Ampatuan clan and their followers after they were dismissed by a Quezon City Regional Trial Court (RTC) two weeks ago.

In their motion for reconsideration, government lawyers led by Chief State Prosecutor Claro Arellano also renewed their appeal for RTC Judge Jocelyn Reyes to stop to exhibit himself from the case due to "bias and great ignorance of the rules of court."

In dismissing the rebellion case on March 26, Barlig said the prosecution did not provide enough evidence to establish probable cause to charging rebel Ampatuans, their followers and 30 unidentified gunmen to Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Gov Zaldy Ampatuan, Maguindanao Vice Gov Esmael Mangudadatu and 57 other slain members and supporters with rebellion.

Undue weight

The state prosecutors countered that the judge committed grave abuse of discretion and violated court rules when he allowed defense lawyers to participate in the determination of probable cause by letting them examine prosecution witnesses and evidence.

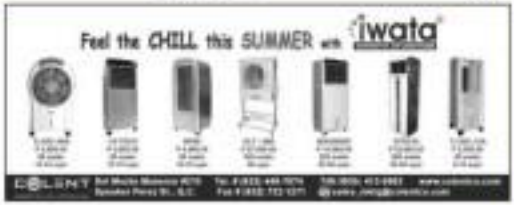
They said Barlig gave "undue weight" to the defense's claim that no rebellion had taken place even if all the elements of a rebellion were present in Maguindanao as the government responded to restore order following the massacre of 57 people allegedly by members of the Ampatuan family and their followers.

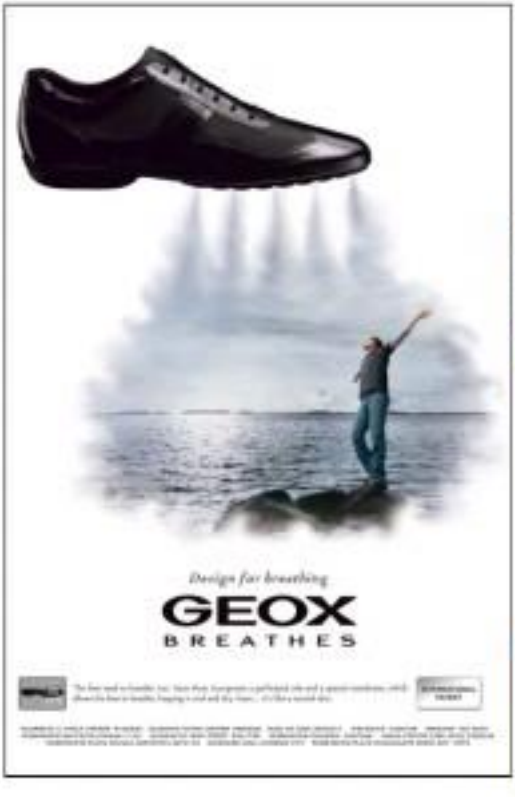
The prosecutors said their witnesses were able to show that the Ampatuans planned and ordered their followers to take up arms against and resist government forces when the declaration of martial rule and the imposition of armed checkpoints and clearing operations in strategic areas, closed all local government offices and stopped the delivery of all public services in Maguindanao.

Why the need?

"We, they said, was the reason President Macapagal-Arroyo declared a state of emergency and later martial law in the province, adding: "If indeed the government had full control of the situation, why the need to declare a state of emergency and later martial law? And if true that no armed group would be loyal and daring enough to challenge the might of government forces, why is the state of emergency still in place in Maguindanao even after the lifting of martial law?"

Jerome Aning





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Airport exec gives way to probe

By Jerome Aning

THE CHIEF SECURITY OFFICER OF THE country's premiere airport has gone on leave after he was linked to an alleged scheme to smuggle 69 overseas Filipino workers into East Timor on Easter Sunday.

In an interview, Angel Alcalde, Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) assistant general manager for security and emergency services, denied accusations he had something to do with the alleged human smuggling attempt.

"I filed for a leave of absence to give a free hand to the investigators and so I can clear my name," he told reporters.

MIAA general manager Melvin Matibag in the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) said in a press statement that he had asked the National Bureau of Investigation to conduct a separate investigation of the incident.

"The case will be opened to the persons," he said.

The controversy stemmed from the interception of 69 OFWs as they were about to take a chartered flight to the East Timorese capital Dili on Saturday morning at Naia Terminal 3.

Two "fixers officers" acting on behalf of the OFWs were initially accosted by airport officials after they allegedly tried to process the passengers' immigration papers without the OFWs appearing personally for the procedure.

Questionable documents

All of the OFWs who had questionable documentary were refused boarding while the rest of the group were allowed to leave.

Matibag on Monday suspended the operations of Pata of Nationwide Aviation Support Services (Nasser), the aircraft handler which facilitated the OFWs' trip, for trying to board the OFWs directly onto the plane without requiring them to go through normal passenger procedures.

He said Alcalde was being investigated after the latter's office was found to have supposedly approved the entry of Nasser's eight vehicles, two vehicles which would have carried the OFWs, into the tarmac area.

Before filing his leave, Alcalde sent Matibag a one-page memorandum denying any wrongdoing. Alcalde said he was duty authorized to approve the request for a pass for the Nasser vehicles.

The actual details of the chartered flight were stated in a March 25 letter sent by Nasser to another airport official, Octavio Lina, MIAA assistant general manager for operations and concurrent Terminal 3 operations manager.

The letter to Lina contained approved signatures of officials of pertinent Naia-based government agencies such as the customs and immigration bureaus, the national police's Aviation Security Group and the Bureau of Quarantine.

Alcalde said Lina should also be asked to explain why the trip was approved.

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Power supply down, but rates way up

From page A1

ply shortfall.

The shortfall stems from the shutdowns, but supply problems and low generating capacity of various power plants under the country's main island.

The generation charge component of customers' monthly bills surged 93 centavos per kWh this month to P4.7609 per kWh, from last month's P3.8117 per kWh.

Extremely high prices

In a briefing yesterday, Iran-do de la Peña, Meralco-utility economics head, attributed the significant rise in generation cost to extremely high prices at the wholesale electricity spot market (WESM), from which Meralco got 14.5 percent of its supply.

Meralco gets 66 percent of its supply from its independent power producers (IPPs) and another 34 percent from the state-run National Power Corp.

Power from the WESM cost Meralco P11.63 per kWh as a result of skyrocketing bids at the electricity bourse, with demand far outstripping supply.

In the past, power producers selling electricity at WESM was accused of manipulating supply to jack up prices.

The current power supply situation remains precarious due to the onslaught of the El Niño phenomenon, which experts say could last as late as June.

While not as heavily dependent as the Mindanao grid on hydropower generation, low water elevation has also hit Luzon.

The low generating capacity of Luzon's hydropower facilities was exacerbated by the simultaneous maintenance shutdowns of a number of plants in the grid.

Meralco IPPs

The price of electricity that Meralco buys from its IPPs, mainly natural gas-fired power plants Sta. Rita and San Lorenzo of Lopez-led First Gen Power Corp., also increased due to the maintenance shutdown of the Camp Macabulaya facility in Pulilan.

The Malampaya project is the natural gas source of both Sta. Rita and San Lorenzo.

While it was under preventive maintenance, the two plants continued to run using condensate fuel. This, however, caused the cost of power generated by the two plants to go up as condensate is more expensive than natural gas straight from Malampaya.

DINDINO SILVERIO/PHILIPPINE STAR

DINDINO SILVERIO/PHILIPPINE STAR Restaurant customers stand near the doorway after lights went off due to a power failure on Thursday in Manila.

The maintenance shutdown lasted from late February to March 13.

During that period, the additional cost incurred as a result of using condensate fuel amounted to about 62 centavos, which the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) allowed Meralco to recover over a period of six months.

For the April billing period, no additional 7 centavos per kWh would be added to the generation charge component as part of the ERC's provisional-ly-approved amortization of the deferred recovery.

Deferred

While Meralco's generation charge in March was lower by almost 93 centavos per kWh vis-a-vis April, the March figure was a "suppressed rate," as Meralco deferred the recovery of some of its recoverable costs, De la Peña said.

"We were also at around the same level late month, but we deferred the recovery of some costs to mitigate the impact on consumers. But this month, we can't defer such costs anymore. We also have to pay our suppliers. Hopefully, we won't have the same added costs next month," the told reporters.

Distribution charge

Apart from the increase in generation charge, Meralco customers would also have to contend with the reflection of Meralco's ERC-approved distribution charge increase.

The increase, which was granted under the performance-based regulation (PBR) scheme, was approved as early as December but would not be passed on to consumers until this month.

The particular increase announced is almost 27 centavos per kWh.

The PBR scheme allowed distribution utilities such as Meralco to change rates based on projected investments and operating expenses related to electricity distribution.

Rotating brownouts worsen in Metro, parts of Luzon

From page A1

day "due to insufficient generation power capacity of the power generation suppliers."

National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP) said the supply deficiency in the Luzon grid was highest (about 830 MW) at around 2 p.m. Peak demand was expected to reach 7,002 (MW) while available operating round at only 6,169 MW.

SC can't take heat

In Baguio City, even the Supreme Court could not take the brownouts coupled with the heat. Temperatures in the summer capital rose to 27.2 degrees Celsius on Thursday.

Baguio experienced its hottest day this year on Tuesday when the Mercury rose to 29 degrees, said Elbren Aquino, a meteorologist.

When an outage struck yesterday morning, employees of the Supreme Court stopped work and left the tribunal's building for an early lunch break.

They resumed work in the afternoon, but some justices, who hold summer sessions in the city, opted to leave for the long weekend break instead, the latest reported.

The tribunal's Baguio court house is designed to keep in heat so it cools readily by mid-morning or mid-afternoon. Justices had relied on huge electric fans to hold sessions.

The entering breweries had been battling bouts of Baguio between 10 a.m. and noon, when the heat starts to rise. Other parts of Baguio and Benguet have suffered brownouts between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Below capacity

Data from NGCP, the agency tasked with transporting power from generation plants to power distributors, showed that several generation facilities were either still out of commission or producing power below capacity.

One of the power plants not yet in operation is a unit of the 1,000-megawatt (MW) Ilijan coal-fired power plant in Batangas.

The 647 MW Sta. el 2 unit of the Ilijan coal-fired power plant had been down since April 5, while the 250-MW Pagbilao 1 unit of the 735-MW Pagbilao coal-fired power facility in Quezon would remain on maintenance shutdown until April 20.

Both plants are being operated by Team Energy Inc.

Sual's problem

Despite their best efforts, engineers failed to reconnect the Sual coal-fired power plant to the Luzon grid after making initial repairs on the "mechanical problems."

More problems prevented Team Energy from resynchronizing Sual Unit 2 as it would be connected to the grid, said Gregg Bautista-Diaz, the firm's external affairs manager.

"Mikabe (It's not definite)," he said when asked if repairs could be completed on Thursday.

On Wednesday, Team Energy announced that Sual was already prepared to synchronize with the grid on Thursday.

"It's a minor (glitch), but sometimes the small things are difficult to fix. Our only way to explain (it) to the public for the team's term is that there's a problem with one of the valves," he said.

The defect cut by half the power generated by the plant, he said.

Gas-fired plant

Medium 40 and 20 of the 1,000-MW Sta. Rita natural gas-fired power plant had scheduled major outages until April 30 and 25, respectively. The plant is run by First Gen Power Corp. of the Lopezes.

The 300-MW Malaya 1 unit of Lopez Philippines Corp.'s 650-MW Malaya thermal power plant was not running yesterday due to a boiler feed.

A number of other generation facilities were also not producing as much power as they normally would.

Basang Private Power Corp.'s 225-MW oil-fired power plant was generating only 60 MW of power due to low fuel pressure, while the non-MW Bian Block II of the 1,200-MW Ilijan natural gas-fired power plant could only produce 300 MW due to high circulating water line differential pressure.

Pitch 11 Mitsubishi, a diesel-power facilities in Luzon, were likewise not performing to capacity.

The 345-MW San Roque multi-purpose facility in Pangasinan was producing only 90 MW, the 246-MW Angat in Bulacan was 71 MW, the 360-MW Magat in Isabela only 90 MW, the 138-MW Binga in Benguet just 58 MW, and the 728-MW Kalayaan, 320-MW to only one 360-MW coal-fired power unit operating.

Acting Energy Secretary Jose Rizalda said the power situation should improve soon, as some of the plants that were out of commission resume operations.

Both Ilijan and Sual should have gone back on line last night, with Sual ramping up to its full 1,200-MW capacity by today.

"For the month of May, there will be sufficient contingency and regulating reserves, there will be no planned outages, and all generators are available," Bautista said.

Plant maintenance activities are usually done in April and May, due to the May 10 elections, however, these activities were done in advance to ensure steady supply of power during the election period.

Another hydro plant

While saying that there is a need to relieve Mindanao's dependence on hydro sources to address the power problem, the government is seeking to build another hydropower facility in Luzon del Sur.

On Wednesday, officials of Agus Hydro Power Corp. (AHPC) led the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of the third Agus hydro power facility.

Salahuddin Pangarungan, AHPC vice president, said the Agus III project would rise on the Lanao-east portion of the Agus River basin, which draws water from Lake Lanao.

"The Agus III project would generate 200 MW and will be commissioned within 48 hours," Pangarungan said.

Chinese funding

He said the project would be funded by a $156-million loan from Exim Bank of China.

"Once we get the loan from China Exim Bank, we will immediately conduct surveys," he said.

Pangarungan said the project would affect some residents but added the government was willing to compensate them.

"We will pay the lands affected by the project," he said.

Francisco Godines, Agus III vice president for administration and security, said the completion of residents affected by the project was important to us success.

Opposition

Godines, a retired general, noted the statement in the wake of opposition from residents of nearby Dumar town, who said they would block the construction of the new hydropower facility.

Godines said despite the opposition, he was optimistic that the project would be completed in four years time. With a report from Rachel Lloyd, inquirer Mindanao

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Anticorruption drive comes to town

FROM NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES to regional development councils (RDCs), implementation of the anticorruption campaign of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) has now reached towns and cities in the provinces.

PAGC chief, Secretary Constancio de Guzman, said the move to bring the campaign down to the municipal level was aimed at making the implementation of the Integrity Development Action Plan (Idap) a national effort in both scope and character.

Idap briefings were recently conducted in Naga City (with 27 barangays) and San Jose City in Nueva Ecija (37).

Earlier briefings were conducted in San Isidro town in Nueva Ecija (with 9 barangays), and Carmi town in Bohol (14).

The Idap consists of 22 specific anticorruption measures under four major areas of implementation (corruption prevention, education, deterrence development and enforcement), and strategic partnerships (multisectoral involvement).

"These constitute the mandate of the PAGC as Presidential Management Staff to coordinate and curbing corruption in the executive branch," De Guzman said in a statement.

Provincial Idap briefings were also recently conducted in Albay, Sorsogon, Catanduanes, Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte, Masbate and Bohol.

Dethroned Bicol beauty queen fights for dream

From page A1

about standing up for people who are poor and lests out of wedlock. It is a fight for accountancy," Rajyaal in an interview at her house made of wood, bamboo and "nipa" leaves.

She has been living in the house without electricity for 20 years.

Reviewing Filipinas Charities Inc. (FICI) book bank has owners when it discovered false information in her birth certificate—that she was born in San Vicente, but in Camarines Sur, where she and her mother said she was actually born in Daet, Quinta, that her father is a Catholic Filipino when, in fact, he is an Indian, and that her parents were married when they were actually not.

Mother is OFW

During the postponed's parent and individual interviews in November last year, Raj had said she was born in Quinta, where her mother, Jenny Rajyaal, had worked as a domestic helper from 1986 to 1988, and was brought to the Philippines a month later.

Raj has professed her innocence, saying she had nothing to do with the information in her birth certificate because she was only a baby when it was registered three years after. She discovered the inconsistency when she applied for a college scholarship at the Francis Hughes Foundation, which had also been contested earlier by the same group.

Raj said she said her mother had no clue that she would someday be joining a national beauty pageant and that they were not able to correct the errors in her birth certificate because she would need to pay expenses.

Local contests

The youngest in a brood of five children, Raj started joining local beauty pageants when she was 17 years old, as well as several entries in San Vicente High School.

"Whenever I won, I would give the prize money to my mother, who saved it up to buy needs for the planting season," she said, like rambut, now 18, is a tenant farmer, a fisherman and "fake" in their village.

"My dream, more than to be a beauty queen or a model, is to just really give my family a comfortable life," said Raj, who graduated, cum laude, with a journalism degree at Bicol University.

Raj won Miss Bicolandia in 2007 and Miss Philippines-Earth's pageant in 2008. With her winnings, she wanted buying land on installment basis for her mother.

"She married at least seven times or another ... about four times, it was hard not to have your own place. When there were conflicts we were always forced to leave," Raj said in Bicol.

Ms. Leandro Pili, Raj's English teacher at San Vicente High School, said she used to coach Raj for numerical contests.

"What always amazed me about Venus was her determination to succeed. Whenever she joined contests, we would have to practice and drill her for exams have seen old and failed. But she was never discouraged," Pili said.

Resigns or be dethroned

In a press conference in Naga City on Wednesday, Raj revealed how hard she cried when she was told about the decision of BPCI officials to cut short of her title.

Her predecessor, she said, earned a day after she was crowned on March 6 when first Mr. Marquez de Arrastre, pageant head, supposedly expressed shock when she learned that she was born in Dolta.

Raj said she was given two options—resign or be dethroned.

She said she was assured to sign a letter of resignation and was advised not to talk about the reason for it to protect her and her family from "judgment" by people who would belittle them because of her past."

When she told the organizers that she would not just sign a document without the presence of a lawyer, they met again for several hours only to tell her that she would be dethroned, she said.

Raj's replacement will be the contest's second runner-up, Ms. Ian Heidette Hanson, as the first runner-up, Dianne Sison was only 17 years old then.

According to Miss Universe pageant rules, the winner of the title must be 18 years old.

Poor girls' dreams

Anje Santos, Raj's talent manager and mentor, said he was shocked at the sudden decision of BPCI. "I killed the dreams of poor beautiful girls like her who came from poor families to pursue their goals," she said.

"But she never given due process, he added.

(MUST) MOMENT OF TRIUMPH Ms. Venus Raj shortly after she was crowned Ms. Philippine Universe, a dream she certainly pursued to give her mother and family a comfortable life.

EXPERIENCE IS BEST TEACHER Venus teaches her young cousin, Mikiah Angel Galleano, how to pose and walk like a beauty queen in her hometown in Barangay San Vicente, Baao, Camarines Sur.

Because of embarrassment over her dethronement less than a month after she was crowned and the fear of losing the faith of the town, Raj and her mother would not go out of their house.

Raj's name is now all over the blogosphere. Fan page on the social networking site Facebook were created to petition her reinstatement as the "country's rightful candidate in the Miss Universe pageant."

Free legal support

Lawyer Francis Dalisa Pagsa, who sponsored Raj's college education, and another counsel volunteered to defend her for free.

A petition, who requested to be identified only as Ding and a student of Bicol University, said his fan page would average around 200 interactions a day and had more than a thousand members.

One of Raj's friends, Christian Jay Millores, 21, of Daraga town in Albay, believes BPCI has not dealt with Raj's case with tact and decency.

"Pinto noon that the BPCI even failed to properly inform the public and even the persons concerned of the real issue why Venus was dethroned," he said.

Even Daniel Smeeton, chair of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption and also a Bicolano, pledged his group's full legal support during the press conference held at dentist Plaza Hotel in Naga.

'Handiwork of losers'

"I think this is the handiwork of losers who wanted to dethrone a legitimate winner," Smeeton said.

Some 50 children from poor communities welcomed Raj with flowers in dramatize her homecoming support from Mayor Rodolfoson Bichara Imerong, she told them not to give up on their dreams even though how poor they were.

"Our is are inspirations to ordinary girls with beauty and intelligence but with the misfortune of poor farmers or fisherfolk. She is a positive inspirations to ordinary Filipinos who can tell the whole world that economic status is not a hindrance to fulfill a career using their God-given talent," Imerong, Raj's talent managers.

With a report from Juan Escandor Jr., *Inquirer South*; 479 Lazon

'Laughter in a funeral parlor' shocking to 'last man off Bataan'

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celebrating opening your nose. him across more than 160,000 kilometers, more by train, and to this extra. Phil's landlina relations and dramatic flair, he quickly became, as The New Yorker described him, "the bottom thing to hit the American bestseller platform."

He spoke without notes, often accepting multiple engagements to a single day...from lawmen to ordinary public and women's clubs. He addressed Latin American audiences in Spanish, regularly quoted more than 1,000 lines of Shakespeare's verse by heart, helped raise war bonds in several tallies—whatever it took to grab people's ears and make them listen.

Shocking indifference

Loh knew firsthand the night mare and desperation of war and since on US soil the indifferent ease of Americans shocked him as much as the cheerful pleading going on right under police lines.

Having just arrived from the battlefields, Loh was appalled and mangled bodies still fresh in his mind, such gaiety and seeming ingenuous made him lose faith in the interview that 20,000 Filipinos would be had died defending the nation. Like "laughter in a funeral parlor."

The ignorance and complacence he encountered infuriated him, but he refrained from berating his audiences and turned went out of his way to make them feel at ease. During an report in 1942, Loh knew well that enabling people to get him nowhere in terms of getting public support.

The Philippines still needed to be liberated. Perhaps mindful also of the rehabilitation funds he intended eventually used from the United States, as well as the overseas' benefits that would be due to Filipino soldiers, he was careful to position himself as a friend, not a critic. Getting people to like him was an important first step in convincing them to care about the Philippines, after all, and it would serve Filipinos well, both as present and in the long run.

40 years later

By the time it came to selected in the Guinness Book, 40 years had gone by, four people still remembered him. "He's a Bataan," they'd say upon meeting me. "Stands from the Philippines!" I'd nod yes, and they'd go on, "A colonel from Manila. He was my school! ... Are you related?"

Over the years, I've come across countless individuals upon whom he'd made a lasting impression, a testament to his brilliance as an orator, "General Douglas MacArthur's speeches were born out of the auditorium as its shoulders," reported The New Yorker, "and he has been listened on the check by more elaborate than he can remember."

A champion debater since he was in intermediate, Loh also excelled in school plays in high school and college. His experience on stage, along with his sincerity and passion, might have accounted for his ability to captivate audiences as an emotional level. his popular came to as a guest speaker during the war than he earned the unique distinction of having replied his lecture live in a single season.

He spoke on behalf of the men of thousands of soldiers...both Filipino and American—who had fought for the American flag and now languished in prisoners' camps as prisoners of war. He standard lectures "I Saw Bataan Fall" and "Last Man Off Bataan" richly depicted wartime Philippines. The former, the standard of pitch battles and the dire lack of supplies.

Remember that during the battle for Bataan, water, food, medicine and artillery had dwindled to nearly nothing, and our only reinforcements were hundreds of miles away. Recall that President Franklin D. Roosevelt had decided to concentrate US power against Hitler, and that it was not until 1944 that the general public found out about Bataan, Corregidor and the Death March. Remember that Manila was declared by the US government.

Dark nights of danger

Recall that General Douglas MacArthur had retreated, leaving behind his troops in the Philippines so Roosevelt's orders, but had promised to return. It was therefore my grandfather's mission to beat the drum, raise awareness, shake Americans out of complacency and convince that the Philippines would not be forgotten.

THE MAN WHO SAW BATAAN FALL "It is clear on the grounds of the University of Santo Tomas, Brig. Gen. Carlos P. Romulo addresses the first 'Rotary meeting' held in Manila since 1941. Most of the 1st row in his audience had spent three years of enemy occupation here and had been released just 21 days before."

"Under General MacArthur's instructions," he wrote in his autobiography, "I was officially assigned by President Quezon and Secretary Stimson to give the Philippine side of the story." [Secretary of War Henry Stimson.]

In March 1944 he addressed the University of Notre Dame: "In those dark nights of danger, mean men wait for help to come. And that help must come from the strength of people who believe in liberty. Those young men, with many things for which to live, are waiting for our strength to be felt. I who come from the holes of Bataan, holes of terror and tears, holes of death—I who have seen my fellow bubbler torn apart and buried beneath the earth I have defended by a thimble of God. Who spared me, plead with you freely, are to ask our compatriots not to abandon us in this terrible fight."

He spoke from the heart, eagerly and with unceasing fervor, and his audiences were far beyond ally. Over the years, Filipinos were filled with constant dread as he remembered the loved ones he had abandoned and lost home, hypocrisy his with of 20 years.

Virginia Llamas, my grandmother, had been living in town since Japan's surprise attack. She and their four sons had been running from the Japanese, hiding in the hills, almost since MacArthur had called my grandfathers to active duty in mid-December 1941. Each day, I imagined a dozen ways with them only

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was earlier in the year (those letter were lost) the 1942 Pulitzer Prize. Not only that, his radio broadcasts during battle, in which he told the world of Filipino heroism and urge democracy keep fighting, added to the air of the enemy, making the Bataanes, who had discarded their name for protection, all the more "wanted."

Liberation

Liberation finally began on Oct. 20, 1944, when my grandfather—now a brigadier general—joined President Osmeña and General MacArthur on their triumphant return to the Philippines, landing for several days from the islands toward Leyte aboard the 130-meter troopship John Land with 1,000 young American soldiers, tensions were high. But Leyte must have been filled with the hope of returning with his family and creating at a speed of 17 knots (or 31.5 kilometers) per hour must have felt interminable slow.

In November he received a cryptic message from guerrilla leader Say Buddie that gave him reason to believe that his wife and children were still alive. It had been almost three years since he'd had contact with them.

Leyte landing

But the reunion did not come for several more months. My grandmother was trapped in enemy-held territory with my dad and my uncle the oldest two sons, already teenagers, had joined the resistance as guerrillas. Before they could be located and reunited, Leyte had to be secured, which is a new mission. As the new Resident Commissioner to the US Congress, he was to report to Washington about the historic landing in Leyte.

"It is the story of those men on Leyte beach than I have encountered to tell you today," he told lawmakers the House on Dec. 7, 1944, his heart aching for his family, "but it is also the story of other men today fought—in the beginning without uniforms or shoes or guns or food or hope. Their courage inspired us on A-Day on Leyte. They are the Filipino guerrillas whose story one can last be told."

Total destruction

As he spoke those words he could not have known that storm clouds were still on somewhere. The battle of Manila, which ended the Japanese Occupation, resulted in the total destruction of what was then considered one of the most beautiful cities in the Pacific. Retreating in battle by the Spanish in the 16th century, invaded by the Chinese in the 19th, occupied by the British in the 18th, and taken by the Americans at the end of the 19th, Manila had had its share of conflict.

"But never before," my mother's sister would not have prepared the Filipinos for what happened in 1945, when Manila was utterly destroyed in a single month" and more than a hundred thousand civilians were slaughtered. Lieutenant General Tomoyuki Yamashita, nicknamed the Tiger of Malaya, ordered the withdrawal of Japanese troops, prior to the way, but spent two years in Manila as MacArthur's special assistant, has been often quoted as saying, "Of all the stories I have visited, Manila is the most disheartening to me personally."

On March 3, 1945, the same day the battle of Manila finally came to an end, my grandfather kissed his boys and held his wife in his arms once again.

"To the men who fought
In defense of the Philippines
in the 1941-1942 campaign
The ill-trained, ill-armed ir-
regulars
In arrow hideouts and rubber-
shoes
The jokers without planes
The sailors without ships
The men on horseback
Fighting tanks with sabers
The gunners short of shells
The soldiers with obsolete pla-
nes
Hungry in the fastness of
Bataan
And the hunters of Corregidor
Blasted by dysentery, malaria,
further
Starvation and also hopes
Defeated at long last by their
bodies
Sorry to die in their fearless
darkness
In the long cruel march to Capas
And in the concentration
camps
This memorial is dedicated
By their grateful countrymen
Who shall not forget
The valor and devotion
Of the fighters who were mas-
ters of the field
But victory of flesh loyalty and
love."

—Carlos P. Romulo

To learn more about Carlos P. Romulo, log on to www.carlospromulo.org

Meralco service at work.

It takes regular maintenance and constant upgrading of our power distribution facilities to assure the delivery of reliable electricity. In this regard, some power interruptions in the following areas are unavoidable. Please be assured that we are working as efficiently and as quickly to ensure causing the least inconvenience.

TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 2010

MANILA (BINONDO)

BETWEEN 2:00AM AND 5:00PM – THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT BINONDO 138

Portion of Muelle Dia Binondo St. from Muelle De La Industria to Lacuesta Sts. including Poona and Sto. Fernando Sts.

Portion of Juan Luna St. from Plaza San Lorenzo (Plaza Calderon De La Barca) to each of, N. Reyes Ave. (excluding) including Fishmall Bank and Wan Building

REASON: Maintenance work inside Meralco Binondo substation

MAKATI CITY

BETWEEN 2:00PM AND 5:00PM – THE WHOLE OF CIRCUITS MAKATI 132, 133, 143 AND 505

Portion of South Ave., Apelo Ave., Amorsolo and Dela Rosa Sts. from Nagtahan St. to and including Manila Metal Bldg., Avalon Ave Bldg. and Meralco Foundation Inc. Bldg.

Portion of Makati St. from Nagtahan to Taliaba Sts. including Smoke, Wise Object and Tuazon Intersection to Sgt. San Antonio

Portion of Antipolo St. from Chino Roces Ave. (Pasong Tamo) to Amorsolo St. including Kamputs Nursery Bldg., Tropical Hut and Morocco Grug to Ayu Tho Cen Tres

Portion of Kalayaan Ave. from Makati Ave. to South Ave. including Rizal Village, Santolan Village and San Miguel Village, (Side no Bldg., J.P Rizal, J.P. Rizal Extn., Wynnings Center, Philippine Commercial Bldg., Ngug and Pinas Bld. 1, Ngug Dormitory and Residence

Medicina, Cental, Zaharo Chem, Consolidated Dis. to Bldg No.2 Village, Ngug San Ayu

Portion of Makapilapi St. from Antipolo St. to Apelo Ave. Ave. including Nakpunin Galeries, Shinjuku, Sha, Kalimbo Bakuyo Kalinga, Bakuyano, Tangoda, Taba, Lakeside, Quad, St. Paul, Santo Mercado, Lumbayao, Candelaria, Caang, Bakuyano, Bakuyo Heart Sta., Kalimbo and Chino Roces Ave., Hotel Supplement, Cafe Mercado, Peninsula Apartment and Manila Nursing Home to and including Village, Ngug, San Antonio, Makati City.

REASON: Preventive maintenance and loading work inside Meralco Makati substation.

ZAMPEN

BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 5:00AM AND THEN BETWEEN 2:00PM AND 5:00PM – THE WHOLE OF CIRCUITS ASINAN 3232 AND 3332

Portion of San Pedro Apostolic Highway and Governor Drive from Meralco Asinan substation to Bay-I complex including PLDT Aguilino Substation, Villa Lasalle Subd., Villa Lasalle Subd. Phase I, Villa Lasalle Residences, Portion of Shopping Centerdown Rice Mill and Hidagat Feed (Side) in Bgay Sampaloc 1, San Agustin 1, Lore 2, Dalahanglilad

Portion of Governor Drive and E. M. Salas Bayan Ave. from Upo Center Apartments to Bay-I Gate 1 including Trade Mall, Pedestrian Bridge, Side Old Gerges Bridge, Mandaluyong, Tome Subdivision, Bay-I Gate, Tierra Subd., Village, ACC Roads Mrs. Rose Metal Street, Bgay, Pinagbuhatan, Tipas, Pasong Tamo(Ext.) 1-2, Diversion(Ext.) 1, 2 & 3, Mangagahan and San Francisco, Diversion Road

Portion of San Roque, Cainsos River and Cainsos Ave. from Bay-I Gas Complex to Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo Highway including Sunnydale Subd., Sunnydale Ph. 2, Rodel, Sunnydale Village, Rodel, Sunnydale Subd., Sunnydale Townsville, Sunvac Villa Subd., Patrimax Subd., Goldenville 1 Subd. and Pandacans Condo, Homes in Bgay, Sabang, San Francisco and San Jose Communities

Portion of Santiago – Sta. Clara Road from Villa Elang to near C.M. Pelaez Water Well, including Residents of St. John, San Antonio Subd., Residents of Homes, JICA Attendance Homes, Guam Mountain Subd., Carmelite Subd., San Gabriel Area, Bgay, Sabang, Meadow 2, Bgay, Harmony, Bgay, Pasong Camachile 1 & 2 and Sta. Clara, San Jose.

REASON: Preventive maintenance and testing work inside Meralco Ampid substation

TUESDAY TO WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13 - 14, 2010

LAGUNA (LOS BAÑOS AND BAY)

BETWEEN 11:00PM AND 11:59PM (TUE., 04/13/10) AND THEN BETWEEN 12:00AM AND 7:00AM (WED., 04/14/10) – THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT LOS BAÑOS 2307

Poling Bangkal – Mayondon Road from Los Baños – Bay National Road to and including Ilgay Mayondon and Bayog-I Los Baños

BETWEEN 12:00AM AND 5:00AM (WED., 04/14/10) – THE WHOLE OF CIRCUITS LOS BAÑOS 2307 AND 2307 AND PORTION OF CIRCUIT LOS BAÑOS 2307

Portion of Calamba – Los Baños – San Pablo Provincial Road from Calamba – Los Baños Municipal Boundary to Ilgay Old-I Bay including Ganalt (Municipal Hall), Bayog-I Los Baños, Bayog-I Los Baños, Bayog-I Los Baños,

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OPINION

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The 'other' peninsula

IT WAS 68 YEARS AGO TODAY WHEN JAPANESE troops finally overran USAFFE or United States Armed Forces in the Far East positions, maintained by Filipino and American soldiers, in Bataan. The stirring but ill-starred defense of the Bataan peninsula marked the high point of the resistance against the Japanese invasion. A grateful nation remembered it today for that reason, but also and mainly for forging, in the crucible of wartime defeat, an entire generation of martyrs.

EDITORIAL

The Japanese invasion of the Philippines was based on a 50-day plan; the strategic retreat into Bataan and the USAFFE's gallant stand delayed the Japanese Imperial Army's timetable by at least three months. Ferdinand Marcos later all but claimed credit for the delay, though his alleged guerrilla work. But the retaining of Bataan, hallowed by tradition to the last six decades, has been large enough to recover from the deceptions and false claims of a false war hero.

This recovery alone should give all of us hope; the country's true history will assert itself, and Filipinos will remember what ought to be remembered, despite the machinations of those in power, or seeking power, today.

The extraordinary defense of Bataan is a genuine military anderson. Despite the military genius that Gen. Douglas MacArthur later displayed as supreme commander of Allied forces in the Pacific, he completely failed to protect the country from invasion. Even the retreat into the Bataan peninsula and into Corregidor, the strategic island that guards the entrance to Manila Bay, though called for by War Plan Orange, was not subsequently prepared for. Thus, an under-provisioned, outgunned army scattered into Bataan. Its chances of survival nothing squarely on the hope that the United States, which had remodified the country since the turn of the century, would send the necessary reinforcements.

It was the Japanese, however, who resolved new troops, new equipment and new supplies. The invading army, while quick to cast Davao as base for launching an attack on what was then called the Dutch East Indies, present-day Indonesia, needed to defeat the USAFFE in the field to make its occupation of the open city of Manila more than merely symbolic. After finally getting the reinforcements he asked for, the Japanese commanding general, Masaharu Homma, began his final offensive on April 3, 1942—Good Friday.

Bataan fell the following Thursday.

But while the months in Bataan helped swell patriotic pride—to Christians, their stubborn resistance and the dire straits they found themselves in, the doubting soldiers learned to call themselves the Battling Bastards of Bataan (and Mac-Arthur, quite unlikely, as "Dugout Doug")—it was what happened in the aftermath of surrender that left an indelible mark on the Filipino imagination.

The soldiers who surrendered were force-marched through the searing heat of mid-summer in a concentration camp in Central Luzon. Memoirs like those of Death March survivor Ernesto Inhelmann help give us an idea of what those 100 men must have been like. In "A Silent Sacrifice," Inhelmann's memoirs, "The 80-kilometer march [in San Fernando, Pampanga, not the final destination], taking roughly seven days of torturous plodding, almost always started at six a.m. and went on through 11 a.m. with no rest in between. In noontime, no meals were served, and the captors forced us to sit in the dusty, unsheltered road until around 4 p.m. when the march would resume. The cadence was slow and arduous. We did not know any idea where we were going. We just followed the man right in front of us, until perhaps he would collapse on the road, and then we who were behind him became the leading marchers."

The torture did not end there, in San Fernando, Inhelmann and his fellow survivors (an ironic term, that) "were loaded into cattle cars and brought to Capas, Tarlac, and from there to Camp O'Donnell, the infamous site of our homebase ... Never did I imagine that it would serve as a death camp for soldiers."

The historians Ricardo T. Jose and Lydia Yu-Jose, in "The Japanese Occupation of the Philippines," estimate that by late May 1942, "there were several five hundred deaths a day in the camp."

It was in these grim conditions that a people, taught to think in Christian terms by missionaries from another, farther peninsula, found a new generation of martyrs.

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Contradictory decisions of SC and CA

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

RECENTLY, THE SUPREME COURT DENIED the petition for bail of Datumin Bamaodan Gov. Jose Antonio Lovino. He had been convicted for the killings in 2007 of his close friend and business associate Rafael de los Reyes. He had been charged with murder but the Makati Regional Trial Court convicted him only of homicide and sentenced him to a certain term of up to 11 years.

Lovino appealed his conviction to the Court of Appeals and asked that he be released on bail while his conviction is being reviewed. The appellate court denied his bail petition. Lovino went to the Supreme Court.

The tribunal affirmed the CA denial of bail. It said that "while the rules allow the granting of bail to a person appealing his conviction for serious offenses, courts such as the Court of Appeals are to be guided by the principle that the admission of bail pending appeal should be exercised with laxity but with great discretion and only for strong reasons."

A Lovino case like Lovino's case is very similar to the decision's case in Cagayan but the Supreme Court made contradictory decisions.

Lorvin Antipuesta II, now the acting mayor of Baguio, Cagayan, was convicted for the killing of three Baguio councilors and the wounding of a fourth on May 8, 1999 in front of a cockpit in a schoolhouse in Baranguay San Isidro. Baguio. He was originally charged with three counts of murder and one count of frustrated murder.

Six years later, he was convicted by the Manila RTC of three counts of homicide and two counts of frustrated homicide. He appeals. After three homicides and one frustrated murder when all four crimes were committed at the same time by the same person?

That's not the only thing strange in this case. Many strange things began to happen at the Court of Appeals. I will quote from my 2009 column:

"On Jan. 23, 2002, Justices Bienvenido Reyes affirmed the lower court's decision. But five days later, Reyes recalled his decision, claiming that he was not supposed to pen the decision because his job was only to complete the records and endorse the case to the polycrits.

Justices Edgardo Sundiam, for some, the case languished in the sala of Sandiam who, eventually inhibited himself from the case when the prosecution lawyers sought his inhibition.

"When the case was re-raffled, all the justices to whom the case was referred inhibited themselves one after another. Justices Jaime Hernandez, Marvic V. Villarama, Teresita D. Flores, Jose Mendoza, Teopisto Montemayor, Celia Lagman, Mario Guerrero II and Jane Aurora Lantin refused to handle the case. It is now with Justice Juan L. Rabina Jr."

Think of it: Nine Court of Appeals justices inhibited themselves from a case appealed to them. Why? Obviously, this case is too hot to handle. The reasons continued:

"Why is this case too hot to handle? Who is the accused?

"Lovino Antipuesta II is the son of former Mayor Lovino Antipuesta Jr. and grandson of Lovino Antipuesta Sr. who also served as mayor of Baguio. He almost 30 years, the Antipuestas ruled this town. It was only in the elections of 2007, when the Antipuesta father and son, ran for mayor and vice mayor, respectively, that Ignacio Tano defeated Antipuesta Jr. for mayor but the vice mayoralty was won by Antipuesta II, the accused in this case.

"Tano was suspended by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Cagayan. If Antipuesta Jr. (mayor Tano during lifted the suspension order but Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Puno has not implemented the Makati ruling order.

"Antipuesta Jr. is in jail, charged with the killing of lawyer Franklin Tamargo and his daughter who were gunned down at the Eucharist in Manila in August 2005. Tamargo, once an opponent of Antipuesta Jr., was the private attorney in the cases against Antipuesta III.

"Fifteen years after the crime was committed, the accused is still free and is now running the municipal government of Baguio while the mayor, Tano, remains suspended."

This is where the contradiction with the Lovino case comes in. Both Lovino and Antipuesta II have appealed their convictions with the Court of Appeals. But while the CA and the Supreme Court denied the petition for bail of Lovino, the two courts granted bail to Antipuesta II in spite of opposition from the families of his victims.

Do such cases: Both were charged with murder, both were convicted of homicide (three counts for Antipuesta III and one count of frustrated murder), both appealed their conviction and both petitioned for bail. But while Lovino was denied bail, Antipuesta III was granted bail. What's the difference?

Lovino cited illness for asking for bail, so appeals to humanitarian rank. But Lovino was denied bail while Antipuesta II is now free as a bird.

In fact, Andrea Blanca, the mother of one of the victims, Edwin Dizon, said in her petition to cancel Antipuesta III's bail bond that because the accused is not detained in jail, there have been instances when he was campaigning a few of Dizon's relatives' their nominations.

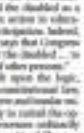
One part of the petition states: "Sara March 13, at about 10 a.m., appellant's brother Lloyd [is convicted in the killing of Tamargo but who is at large] even as he is a fugitive under the law, was at the COMELEC office and, on behalf of appellant [the accused], filed a certificate of candidacy for the municipal bail secured by appellant [Antipuesta III] then armed with a baby Armalite, with his armed bodyguards, and there they openly promised vote-conferences, as described by those who saw [Antipuesta III] himself."

The court's policemen were so overwhelmed by the daring display that they did not serve the warrant of arrest on Lloyd.

If the PNP is too cowardly to enforce the law, the families of the victims must file suits to resolve their petitions and to pass judgment on the case. Justice delayed is justice denied.

Excluding the disabled party-list group

PASSION FOR REASON



Raul C. Pangalangan

SO SOON WE LEAVE THE LATEST IN THE COMelec's orgy of absolutistable decisions. The Disabled Piney Party (DPP), the only party-list organization working to represent the nine-million Filipinos with disabilities, was disqualified, has been denied accreditation by the Comelec.

This is the same Comelec that, until it was rebuffed by the Supreme Court, would do list any leftist, advocates of gay lesbian/bisexual/transgender rights. This is the same Comelec that would allow Pinoy Miley to run, son of President Macapagal-Arroyo, and Dolores Pineda, son of Jueteppe gubernatorial candidate Lilia Pineda, to stand as the first and second nominees of Ang Galing Pinoy, a party-list group supposedly representing security guards and a group to which, under the law, Mosara Arroyo and Pineda should have fide belong.

Former Chief Justice Antonio Pangalinan had already warned us about this a long time ago: "It is ironic that the marginalized and underrepresented in our midst are the majority who suffer poverty, destitution and inferiority. It was for them that the party-list system was enacted.... If the law failed to address the peculiar disadvantages of Filipino bred dwellers cannot be appropriated by the mainstreamers of Padre Faik."

Given the complexity of printing in advance the fifteenth ballot that we have to fill out May 10, I am concerned that there might not be enough time for the Comelec to undo in fully the time around. Assuming there is time, I hope the Comelec will consider the following arguments in favor of the disabled as opposed to the group.

My standard for party-list system of electing lawmakers as an alternative to electing traditional politicians by district. That is why the party-list system is supposed to outfall into the democratic process—to use the language of the law.... "marginalized and under-represented sectors, organizations and parties, and who lack well-defined political constituencies but who could contribute to the formulation and enactment of appropriate legislation that will benefit the nation as a whole."

I realize the malleability of legal text. Simply stated, in the hands of an able lawyer, you can make words mean whatever it is you want them to say, but elasticity of language aside, the Comelec can safely say that, by whatever measure, by whatever yardstick, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are not marginalized and underrepresented in our country.

To start with, the Comelec can appeal to the text of the Constitution itself. The 1987 Constitution has already identified the disabled as a group entitled to affirmative action in education, health, and political participation. Indeed, the Constitution specifically says that Congress shall "design a procedure for the disabled ... to vote without the assistance of other persons."

Affirmative action is built upon the logic, borrowed from American constitutional law, that "prejudice against discrete and insular minorities" may "tend seriously to curtail the operation of those political processes ordinarily ... relied upon to protect minorities." The party-list system is precisely that adjustment in the democratic process to enable PWDs as a political minority to have a voice.

The Comelec can also appeal to the historical interpretation of the party-list clause. So, for instance, that the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons was adopted by Congress upon the advocacy of Amaya Bayal, then sectoral representative in Congress, precursor of the party-list congressmen during the early years of the 1987 Constitution. The Bayal precedent—and the resulting Magna Carta—should remind us one, that the disabled were historically one of the sectors singled out for the party-list seats in Congress. And two, that since Bayal, there has been no specific PWD representative in Congress.

Three, the Comelec can also rely on the Philippines' treaty obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which we signed more than ten years ago. Under Article 29 of the Convention, the Philippines guaranteed its citizens "an environment in which PWDs can effectively and fully participate in public affairs" and to "political and public life on an equal basis with others." The party-list system inevitably answers that need, and the recent Comelec decision pathetically frustrates it.

I actually sympathize with the Comelec as it struggles to implement the 100 candidates from the alphabet soup of party-list groups. It has tried to do some quality-control by fixing objective tests: must not be a religious sect, must not advocate violence, must not front for a foreign group, must not make unlawful statements, must comply with election regulations, etc.

This hasn't solved the problem because, as we have seen, as many bogus groups have emerged out of the woodwork. At some stage, the Comelec will simply have to confront the fact that there is a discretionary power, but that power is guided by principles. In other words, they should cut through the crap and openly declare that an association claiming to represent the "marginalized sector" of homeowners' associations. Optically representing the gated villages) must certainly yield to a bona fide group representing persons with disabilities. In the Philippine setting, we are familiar with discretion in any group appointed by Malacañang, but our solution—to curtail that discretion with procedural and objective tests—clearly hasn't worked. I am willing to sacrifice that discretion on the Comelec, provided they keep faith with the representative norm that animates the party-list system.

Comment: inquirer@yahoo.com

The pandemic that wasn't

WORLD VIEW

Henry J. Miller

PALO ALTO—LAST JUNE, THE WORLD HEALTH Organization, responding to an outbreak of the H1N1(A) virus, or swine flu, boosted the pandemic alert to the highest level, Phase 6, meaning that a pandemic was under way—the first time in 40 years that the organization had taken that declared step. But the outbreak appears to have turned out like the average wild virus: WHO has overactive professional and more like a roasted pork sandwich with apples and sage.

In fact, the WHO repeatedly violated Sherlock Holmes' warning, "It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has all the evidence." Declaring the pandemic alert was double wrong: given that we already assumed he swept the world accurately, it invariably far more lethal than the currently circulating lower virulence H1N1(A), and contravened the WHO's definition of a pandemic: "the worldwide spread of a new geographic area and affecting a large proportion of the population."

Eventually, the appointment of the A(H1N1) flu during the pandemic investigation, which declared as a new public health benefit, because a epidemic is how supplemented, or action supplanted, for be more virulent and lethal seasonal flu strains. During the annual touch of January, 5–7 percent of Americans contract seasonal flu, with 36,000 deaths compared to 0.2 percent during the same week in 2009. The official death toll worldwide from SCHAOS is under 14,000, while seasonal flu kills about 36,000 on average in the United States and hundreds of thousands worldwide.

Many but even public health experts consider the WHO to have been overly alarmist. The decision in April 2009 to raise the pandemic flu threat to the penultimate level, Phase 5 ("Pandemic imminent"), already was a big step in that direction. Moreover, the Phase 6 declaration in June revealed the organization's paradigm to be fundamentally flawed: a warning system based solely on how widely a virus has spread, but that does not consider the nature and severity of the illness it causes, would classify as "pandemics" far too often and, for that reason, lose credibility. Moreover, the WHO's performance has been widely criticized: the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, for example, and on Jan. 11 that it "must act to defuse false pandemics, a disease to health" later this month. And ten WHO officials continue to defend their actions. In a Jan. 14 con. between call with reporters, Dr. Jill Fukuda, the special adviser to the WHO's director general for influenza pandemics, argued that the organization did not overplay the dangers but "prepared for the worst and hoped for the best."

The WHO's defense deviations demonstrate that its officials are either too rigid or incompetent to be trusted. The organization's appointment to the pandemic warning panels—which is what we have some no-nonsense from an organization that is scientifically challenged, self-important and unaccountable—may be able to produce sound expert advice for the future. Until then, governments and citizens should ignore the WHO.

Henry J. Miller, a physician, molecular biologist, and former researcher, is a fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution and in the Competitive Enterprise Institute. He was a US government official from 1977 to 1996.

Lots to do

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

EVERY SUMMER, WE HEAR THE SAME LITANY FROM kids: "It's so boring," and "Nothing to do!" To some extent, it's true. There's only so much you can do at home and kids have learned even to present television kinds as my element.

Outside the home though, there are lots to do. High income gated communities as well as condominium tenants have their own recreational facilities, playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis and badminton courts, even jogging paths. It's modern world [illegible] there, with watchful [illegible] security guards, drivers and bodyguards assigned to the children. ("Watched" is of course relative: too often the guards and drivers are more watchful of the yaya than the children.)

Friendship-ally parent communities are able to supervise, with neighbors helping each other with child care and security "hijacked" for all kinds of activities for young people. I have seen children playing poks (Scrabble), chess, computer games, board games, and basketball, with bonding matches complete with glasses (sigh). Genuinely, it's not an ideal situation, in fact, it's fraught with risks, but the kids do get to play.

It's middle-income families who are probably worst off, stuck in subdivisions without recreational or social activities, and not-so-friendly neighbors. That's where kids get acquainted to outdoor life and activities, hoping for an emotional weekend out at the mall.

The lack of affordable summer options for the kids betrays our skewed priorities. Our neighbors, China especially, put money into the construction of public playgrounds and sports facilities with children as the main beneficiaries. There's a limit: they know that such facilities are investments for the future, producing healthier children and, possibly, war athletes by means of those economic family planning programs that have reduced the number of children per family. The public facilities allow for socialization, kids learning to interact with each other and so pick up survival skills especially for the urban jungle.

Pretty much then, we have to dig into our own pockets or make up for the government's failures.

Priorities

Children's summer should be kept up in our priorities, even in these shifting era a few thousand years. There are quite a few preschools near-but offer summer camps, everything of activities like reading, drawing, crafts, sports.

There are institutions even I would like to attend this morning. I still have fond memories of my own summer trips to "the province" to helped for enhancers with my sister and cousins, and I was lucky to have dad's "province" down in Davao and mom's up in Cagayan. (Sa Bukayan to Isnab.)

There are now a growing number of alternative destinations that offer leisure arts, table rides, exploring this nature you don't have a that of heights because you'll have to go with your kids). Or our kids about animal shows, especially those involving dolphins and elephants. My nephew Michael loves Zoo, but he's never young and we would never around, refused to watch such shows, finding these cruel, kids cultures such was laughter.

There can be occasional treats and our editorial assistant, Tin Tin Ang, highly recommends bears at the Mall of Asia, especially a flight that's more reasonable. "Plane to Clark from Cebu," she working on a schedule to bring the kids, and maybe take in the aquarium as well on Roxas Boulevard.

Museums, etc. sports

This on a Diwa Kidzo as well. Museo Pambata on Roxas Boulevard is definitely worth a visit, and Lumiraj also plans something going on, bonsai exhibits built around science, the environment, history. Alabastro is P100 but Manila residents can get in free on Tuesdays and with a 50 percent discount on other days. Other children land exhibits, old or young) can visit the National Museum on Agrifina Circle. Natural History on Agrifina, and Bangko Sentral and several science. Again Museum in Makati has no famous history museums, a dazzling exhibit of gold artifacts and pottery from precolonial Philippines, and a number of smaller, changing exhibits.

Sports should be high up on your summer agenda. I am lucky to be living close to Forest School in San Juan which has a notable summer sports programs open to both boys and girls. Gyms for rating those can so they'll go to shop early!

Swimming is available for kids at young as 6 months on weekends (parents must go into the pool with the infants, obviously). Football requires a minimum age of 4. There only than 5 can choose from badminton, baseball, basketball, dance, karate, tennis, taekwondo and tennis. Dances requires a minimum age of 6. If your children are 7 and above, you can sign them up for 7 and 21 action tennis. Better, the child has to be at least 10 years old.

Karate's opens programs go by leaders, so you can still catch up for May classes. Call 723-0461 loc. 334, 300, 362 or 276.

Meanwhile the Philippine Educational Theater Association's (Peta) summer theater workshops, which will run from April 26 to May 21. Unfortunately, their children's theater workshops are already full but they still have a Teen Theater, integrated workshop (drama, music, writing and dance) for those aged 13 to 16. For those aged 17 and up, all the way to 77!), you can try their Basic Theater Workshop. Call 725-6244.

I should also plug Peta's plays, with "Juan Tanad, ang Alyadong" up next, running Saturdays and Sundays, April 24 to 25. As the title suggests, it's about the need for honesty and vigilance in elections.

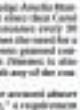
There are, to be sure, other plays, concerts and performances this summer. Again, look at all this as "investments." A few extra performance spots now worth for children, and might help them develop a lifelong interest.

Kids, all these plays, I am going to shamelessly go all the way and make use my story pitch. I want to remind teachers about UP Diliman's summer school for social science students. This will run from April 13 to 16 with several lectures starting "Typhoons, Earthquakes and Other Natural Disasters: The Social Science Response." There's also a field trip to Pinatubo. They will take with its registration on the first day. Contact Maribel Castro for information: mscastro@up.edu.ph. Telephone Nos. 928-2313 and 981-8500 loc.

Email: mmm@inquirer.com.ph

Carol's continuing ordeal

AT LARGE



Rina Jimenez-David

REMEMBER MOST STILL REMEMBER THE CASE of domestic violence that Carolina Escudero (Jinkee Pumaren) filed against Mark Jimenez, former congressman, detainee of the US Federal government and "business partner" Jeffrey Tesoro's closely-held Subic Bay Metals Administration.

Carol filed the case in 2005, after enduring more than a decade of physical, emotional and verbal abuse at the hands of Jimenez, whom she met some in Manila. Because Tesoro (he adopted the surname Jimenez when he married Carol in 1994) was a key witness in the case, the case became headline material when Carol was kidnapped from her condominium unit and confined in a ring about rehabilitation facility owned by a relative of Jimenez. She was rescued from the facility only after a confrontation between different law enforcement groups. Illustrating how narrow and the law can be twist and warped and maneuvered according to the wishes of powerful interest groups.

Many including this columnist, thought that with Carol's timely "rescue" and the filing of a petition for a protection order against Jimenez, her ordeal, at least, would begin to end. But it didn't. The next 18-year-old hopelessly in love with the much-older businessman, had finally ended.

But the latest chapter in the long running case only demonstrates how the law can be used and abused to the detriment of the abused, and to further punish a woman for having the temerity to challenge the once absolute power her parents and backers of her child lord over her. It's also a disturbing illustration of how the justice system—or a law which well-meaning women's groups and human rights organizations had championed as holding out hope for all victims of domestic violence and family abuse, can be twisted, clever lawyers and compliant judges could subvert the law and use it to their own ends.

• • •

THERE is a "gag order" on Carol and her lawyers preventing them from talking to the media about the case. But several observers involved in the dispute from the start have become so concerned about the way the case is evolving.

In April 2007, Carol filed for the issuance of a TPO against Jimenez. Carol and her son live in constant fear and threat from Jimenez, who continues to find a replica of the kidnapping incident. Since Mr. Jimenez is the defendant in the latest quarantine of the law on the granting of TPOs, what is to prevent him or his agents from applying for a TPO against Carol and her son, in order to take her (or her son) for yet another stint in a friendly rehab facility? In such an atmosphere could anyone in Carol's shoes live a productive, independent and secure life?

• • •

IN THE meantime, Carol and her son live in constant tension and fear. Will Jimenez, the convict-turned-businessman who has the resources to hire a regiment of law enforcers, succeed in getting custody of Carol's son? Since Mr. Jimenez is the defendant in the latest quarantine of the law on the granting of TPOs, what is to prevent him or his agents from applying for a TPO against Carol and her son, in order to take her (or her son) for yet another stint in a friendly rehab facility? In such an atmosphere could anyone in Carol's shoes live a productive, independent and secure life?

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OBSERVERS of the case, including family members, are agitated by what they believe is the overdone delay regarding the hearings. This is due, they think, to the failure of the judge to act quickly on critical issues. When he did rule on these matters, it was to reverse or recall orders issued by the previous judges, all on the motion of MJ's counsel. Where goes, Carol's counsel would file a motion for the court to reconsider its orders reversing previous rulings. He would sit on the motions for months, further delaying progress on the case.

It should be pointed out that while MJ has continuously defied the orders of the court, including undergoing a DNA test that he refused until so determined by Carol's son in order to "prove" he's not a pedophile, which would require the parties to merely submit affidavits after which the judge would rule, without need of summoning witnesses. Hence our Carol's son of course vigorously oppose such a measure.

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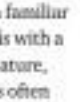
The man behind Edsa

LOOKING BACK



Ambeth R. Ocampo

Epifanio de los Santos was known by his nickname 'Panyong,' but in those days one could not be on familiar first-name basis with a man of his stature, hence he was often addressed or referred to as 'Don Panyong'

EDSA IS A NAME THAT HAS COME DOWN IN history because of events that happened over one month of this long street. In 1986, while all 10 lanes from Ayala to Ortigas were jammed with people power, Edsa was also the name of the Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, nobody seems to know who was entrusted by the Commission on Human Rights to find out more having what may very well be the longest street in Metro Manila named after a man. Some people merely remember him as a historian, or as one of the pioneer directors of the National Library of the Philippines where the endless task is carried in his honor. What did he do? What did he write? What is the connection?

Edsa seems to have grown from many streets over a long time. It connects three 20th-century, four city Santolan Monument at Mandaluyong to Caloocan passing through Quezon City, Mandaluyong, Makati and Pasay with an unrelated road turning the Mall of Asia. Edsa is no longer what it has replaced what used to be the 6th magistral in Mandaluyong to "Mega Manila."

Street dogs to one section, the beginning of Edsa was a corner during the time of Quezon known as Nueva No. 1 and Nueva No. 2 which is now 1st and Real. Then it was expanded into Highway 54, which makes us wonder what happened to the 53 other highways we don't know about. Finally, Highway 54 was renamed Epifanio de los Santos Avenue.

The late E. Aguilar Cruz of the Historical Institute once told me that when they were counting around for a new name for Highway 54, it was suggested that it be named after a Filipino statesman. Student Rizalen had Tak Alaine Street in Manila already, so he was only a matter of time before people would ask—Senator de la Cosa, J.C., Gregorio Lauda, Epifanio de los Santos Avenue and Teodoro A. Agoncillo—are all distinguished because they were still alive and well at the time. So, the only historian conveniently dead and with many honored dead time ran out Epifanio de los Santos. That's how we supposedly got stuck with Edsa.

To get to know Epifanio de los Santos (Manila, 1867 – 1934), the first senior is the biographical profile in volume 1 of "Filipinas in Focus" (1969, 1000) and Teodoro A. Agoncillo's introduction to "The Revolutionary," a compilation of De los Santos' pre-war profiles of Emilio Aguinaldo, Andres Bonifacio and Emilio Jacinto (1958, 1970).

Epifanio de los Santos was known by his nickname "Panyong," but in those days one could not be on familiar first-name basis with a man of his stature, hence he was often addressed or referred to as "Don Panyong."

Born on April 7, 1871 to Estefanio de los Santos and Anastasia Crisostomo, he attended the Ateneo Municipal and the University of Santo Tomas.

During the second phase of the Philippine Revolution, Don Panyong, together with Jose Clemente Zulueta, published the newspaper Libertad in Malolos. The paper stopped publication when their printing press was commandeered by the revolutionaries, and Don Panyong then joined the newspaper La Independencia edited by Mariano Ponce. He also became a prominent official throughout his life, contributing articles to publications like El Renacimiento, La Democracia, La Patria and The Philippine Review (of the legal publications where his detailed profiles of Gabriela Silang and Melchora Aquino first appeared and inspired.

He lived in his father's hometown where he was, over time, from district attorney to governor of Nueva Ecija. It was there that he conducted much of the research and historical writing that led to his appointments in 1916 as director of the National Library succeeding Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera.

It is said that he was a hands-on researcher as well as a hands-on director. Once when asked why he insisted on doing his own research instead of by going into the stacks and handing the requested books and manuscripts himself instead of asking the staff, he was quoted to have said, "All of us here are servants of the reading public. I set the head of the servants and I must show that I have better knowledge of the servants' duties so that I can set them right when I want to show that our service here is efficient and that we are really working to serve."

Don Panyong found manuscripts relating to Andres Bonifacio in a chicken coop in Batangas, which led to the writing of his pioneering essay on the "Great Plebeian."

Who can only wish we knew more about Don Panyong's retiring/decisive role of his friend Apolinario Mabini in "Pinakuan" (Mabini's true surname) (Election fraud and its remedies). It would have been very timely for the coming May 10 elections.

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Comments are welcome in my Facebook fan Page.

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Cultural agenda for new president

IT IS NECESSARY TO FORMULATE a national policy that fully recognizes and gives due importance to culture as the core and foundation of government's political and economic policy. One would see fundamental development and flowering of the nation's native and historical heritage, that takes a principled position on the advancement and rehabilitation of a national culture based on the multifaceted elements of ethnic and regional origins as key national and democratic aspirations for the people's welfare and well-being. On this basis, the following, among many others, are (or should) proposed:

1. The formation of a separate and full-fledged Department of Culture to oversee and manage the previous cultural agencies of the government and to take the lead in coordinating all necessary tasks and efforts for the advancement of national culture and in promoting the interest of workers and all artists.

2. The establishment of a National Institute for the Creative Industries at the University of the Philippines to undertake external research, train external workers and design a national plan for genuine cultural advancement and for effective cultural protection in order for the public to benefit fully from any product of creative work, and to help in the full realization of the potentials of all workers and artists of talent.

3. Support for the potential of culture and creativity as vital to our economic production, investing, in improving literature, fine arts, ja- (illegible) music, dance, film and other arts as cultural or career industries that are capable of generating sizable employment and export earnings, apart from promoting and enshrining nationalism and dignity.

4. Promotion and empowerment of IPs, also as the national language, method of study, and most effective language of cultural education, while preserving minor and regional languages as important components of the nation's cultural wealth and improving the teaching of English for practical and global requirements.

5. Financing undertakings for the protection and upkeep of the country's material and cultural heritage not only in the interest of tourism but more importantly because these are symbols of national dignity and unity.

6. Development of an official national ordinance in every municipality, city and province who shall be the representative of the Department of Culture and implementor of national projects in those places.

7. Training of teachers especially on the basics of language, literature and social studies in the elementary school and high school, for them to become active representatives of effective cultural education; this apart from the establishment of curricula and references on proper and accurate cultural information and values.

—FIDEL V. ILARDE, JR.
National Artist for Literature

LETTERS

Attack on Holy Father based on biased info

I GET THE IMPRESSION THAT GLORIA de Quiros does not know well Pope Benedict XVI, for his ambivalent take in the April 5 column, a non-event coming him with Pope John Paul II. These two men have the same doctrinal and moral stand on issues which they differ in their viewpresentation. Perhaps De Quiros is not a Catholic and so he does not mind blaming the head of the Church without much research, just like a number of the many on our western clime smack rather than defend because they do not consider the Church as their motive.

The Church is our family. If your mother has done wrong, would you rely on "sources" that attack her? Go to her and clarify the issue. Don't be one of those around attacking her like what those who do not belong to the family are doing. Well, I can't blame De Quiros for not belonging to the family, and so I would like to understand him. I just beg him to please ask our family too.

—EUFFER TEJERO,
eutejero@gmail.com

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Blumentritt Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-0703, 897-0704, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

We have edited to the effect: we requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Christ's risen, life's brighter

WARMEST EASTER GREETINGS TO ONE and all!

The "Exultet," in its attempt to capture the joy of Easter, triumphantly proclaims: "Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor, radiant in the brightness of your King! Christ has conquered (double) glory fills your (holiness) realm forever!" This exalted(est Easter proclamation faithfully preserves and spreads the jubilant spirit of our Christian forebears who, profoundly witnessed the astounding event of Christ's rising from the dead. In fact, this is **the basic event in human history** in the sense of the Good News that Jesus preached—Christ our Lord conquered the power of death through his glorious resurrection. The Apostle Paul, so enamored by this mysterious victory of life, declares to him: "O death, where is your sting?" (1 Cor. 15:54) Christ has definitively eradicated the ultimate source of suffering, sadness and despair—death.

Noticeably, many Filipinos today are still cynical about progress and development. With the mounting cost of power by elevated doses, crime and violence, graft and corruption, abuse of human rights and other ills in the social end, only a few can speak of hope for a better Philippines. The vast majority wallow in abject poverty. Electoral processes are a manipulated, bullyragtic (unladylike) mess leaving and suffering the losers bitter and disillusioned and disinterested in "taking an look."

Sacrificial killings and lessons in hate become rampant. Our children in fact have turned into lapsed dunces due to illegal logging and bulldozing mining. Yes, there is only some of the gruesome facets of evil that bear the stamp in our misery and hopelessness. Even so, why should we fear? In his annual Easter message, 1998 (CBCP), Pope Benedict XVI said: "By his living the Lord has not taken away suffering and death from our world, but has conquered them and, in their very heart, has opened a way to the (illegible) of the gates."

However dark the horizon may seem, we can declare the radiant triumph of Easter joy. We are **new children of resurrection! Let no one yield** to despair and lack of trust! We hold in our hearts the very foundation of hope. Christ is risen! Christ is alive in our midst: only persons in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, in and with Him, the journey through life gets brighter nor darker. Bright and strong with great (illegible) confident of the promise. In this season of Easter, as we continue to contemplate the Lord's resurrection, we let the Holy Spirit bring us to that glorious event where we may encounter the risen Lord again and relive the joyful hope of Easter. May we, who truly experience this life-giving hope, light and love of Christ, also become rays of hope for the despairing, lighted candles amidst darkness, and companions for the abandoned. Coalitions as one!

—ARCHBISHOP SOCRATES B. VILLEGAS, D.D.,
president, Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines,
Bishop of Imus,
chrgeneral@cbcpworld.net

Useless educational plan

JUHAN C. PUBONAS OF THE GOVERNMENT Service Insurance System stated in his letter, dated July 1, 2009, that the P12,000 I received from my employer was the tax refund (P222,000) of my daughter to the maximum provided for plans under the government program. The (illegible) the clear provisions of the Education Plan Agreement wherein General Provisions No. 1 states: "EXCEPTIONS AND GUARANTEES—In consideration of the full payments by the Planholder of the Contract Price stated in the terms' side and his fulfillment of the other terms and conditions of this Plan Agreement, GMS guarantees to pay (illegible) the Educational Plan at maturity date and other stipulated school fees when they fail or become due irrespective of future costs, upon confirmation of acceptance of enrollment of the scholar in a duly accredited Philippine College or (illegible) as determined by the planholder."

I sent GMS president Winston Garcia notarized (on Aug. 10, 2009) and again on Jan. 11, 2010), appealing that GMS adhere to the provisions of the Installed Plan Agreement and the (illegible) "Kahit Isang Kahit Kailan, Hinding-hindi." As of this writing, I have not been (illegible).

If the GMS can afford to grant a P20,000 rebate for plus P2,000 monthly stipend to 200 winners of a raffle contest and sponsor a gaming contest annually—not to mention hosting a P50-million New Year party—then why can't it (illegible) the benefits as stipulated in the Education Plan Agreement?

I purchased an Educ Plan (non-infla-tionary Education Plan) believing that the GSIS will honor its commitments in the future. I am appealing to the GSIS, through Mr. Garcia, to (illegible).

—TIMOTHY E. BAQUIRAC,
605, L.M. Amarin Complex,
San Pedro, Laguna

For irksome foreigners

AS AN EXPATRIATE WHO HAS LIVED IN Angeles City since my retirement from the US military over 15 years ago, I am appalled at the behavior of what I call the "squatter foreigners" I chance upon every day. Let me offer them some "suggestions":

1. If you've been living here in the Philippines for five years, you're no longer a tourist. Get a resident visa.

2. If you have no pension or health insurance, go home.

3. Don't park your car or sit on sidewalks.

4. Don't demand a senior citizen's discount. You forfeit yours the moment you exercise this (illegible). Let your money be your guide.

5. Learn to speak at least English when the dark doesn't understand you.

6. If you can't afford to give a tip, don't eat out.

7. If you think Korea or Thailand is so much better, then by all means go there.

8. Treat people as you would be treated.

—CHARLES J. BOYER,
#13A-2 39B, Manila,
Philippines 1109

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Across the NATION

Poll terror tactics rear ugly head again in Abra

BAGUIO CITY—ARMED men have reportedly been knocking door-to-door to deliver a message to households in Bangued, Abra, to vote for the candidate of a prominent political family there in exchange for a thousand pesos.

Because of this report, the Commission on Elections is taking a fresh look at the situation enveloping Abra, which is notorious for its political intimidation and private armies.

The province remains an "area of concern" for the poll body, although it has not been elevated to the status of a political hotspot, said lawyer Julius Torres, Comelec Cordillera chairman.

He said nothing violent had taken place since the start of the campaign season, but this latest report confirmed that people there were on edge.

Abra forces

The contending families in the May 10 election in Abra are represented by incumbent Abra Rep. Luzviminda Ilagan and her husband Vicente Valera, and her former ally Jocelyn Bernos, former Abra Gov. Vicente Valera whose wife, Elva, is seeking a congressional seat; and another congressional bet, Jocelyn Bernos.

Also Gov. Bernardo Bernardo, whose brother Luis was assassinated in December 2006, represents a third political force there.

The Abra police have no record of a complaint of a village official who was reported beaten by the armed men.

The Bangsamoro Islamic Liberation Front has denied that its members were behind the shooting.

The men kept asking people who they would vote for in the May 10 elections.

Speaking for his household, Ernesto Dalle, a resident of the village, recalled telling the armed men that 11 of them are voters and "the men took down all their names."

For 'merienda'

"Upon completing the list, they forcibly ... gave us P1,000 bills," said Dalle, in an affidavit sent to the Philippine National Police headquarters in Camp Crame, Quezon City.

The money was supposed to be for "merienda (snacks) from the son of a political family," Dalle said.

Then suddenly, one of the men hit Dalle with the butt of a long-barreled pistol, and accused him of "distributing money for a certain candidate."

"They threatened us not to move [and said] 'Anong pamunuan; subhan ak kayo. Isusuko ko addi pamunuan (Nobody wins. They will retaliate if you boast)," the official said.

Some antivenities, which have been studying election violence in Abra, attribute the feuds there to its long ties with the neighboring Ilocos region.

Dalle said he was appealing to Director General Jesus Verzosa, PNP chief, to order a closer look at the peace and order situation in Abra.

Dalle situation

In Iloilo City, Aux archbishop Angel Lagdameo condemned electoral violence and called on the Catholic faithful to pray for peaceful and honest elections.

In a pastoral letter dated March 25, Lagdameo expressed concern over violence election-related cases in Iloilo that "reminds us of the fragility of our democracy."

Lagdameo, former president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), cited two grenade-throwing incidents and the killing of a candidate on the Iloilo Cathedral compound in Iloilo City.

Former mayor Luis Morelle Jr. of Pulupandan, Negros Occidental, was shot by a lone gunman after attending Ash Wednesday Mass at the cathedral compound on Feb. 17. He died hours later while being treated of his wounds.

Last month, a grenade explosion damaged a bakeshop and restaurant owned by Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas, wounding a security guard. A separate explosion also damaged the house of De Asque's brother.

Morelle was running for his former post, while Treñas is running for representative of the city's lone congressional district. Vicente Gobrun, with reports from Aytha Alva Paredes, Inquirer Northern Luzon; and Wayne P. Burgos Jr., Inquirer Visayas

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German draws life term for rape-slay

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—A Regional Trial Court in Bilar has sentenced a German national to 40 years in jail for the 2008 rape and killing of a Filipino entertainer in Bohol.

In an order issued on March 31, Judge Virgilio Mirasol, of the Iloilo RTC Branch 7, found Adolf Christian Wetzenrot guilty of raping and killing Mylene de Jesus.

The court also ordered him transferred to the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) detention center in the capital town of Tagbilaran.

Dale Rosa, 29, mother of five, was found dead at dawn on March 7, 2008, in Barangay Bajoh at the northern end of the 1,800-hectare Panglao Island. Her remains bore signs of rape, beating wounds mostly in the head and cigarette burns.

Mirasol, 48, was arrested hours after Dale Rosa's remains were found. A Bureau of Corrections official said he was the prime suspect in the rape-slay of Mylene de Jesus, 21, a Filipina entertainer in Barangay Cabawan in Tagbilaran City.

Mirasol's arrest was made possible by a tip from a Filipina entertainer who said she had seen him with Dale Rosa in a videoke bar in Panglao.

Mirasol's arrest was made possible by a tip from a Filipina entertainer who said she had seen him with Dale Rosa in a videoke bar in Panglao.

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'Lumad' ignore warnings, keep eating poison

KIDAPAWAN CITY—"LUMAD" residents of North Cotabato continue to ignore warnings from health officials about the danger of eating wild yam, or "ubian," due to lack of food in the hinterlands, officials said.

Brigida Guillaran, provincial social welfare officer, said the devastation wrought by the El Niño phenomenon on crops was making it more difficult for indigenous peoples to feed themselves.

As of Wednesday she said, at least 70 lumad have been hospitalized for kapya poisoning.

Guillaran said the victims were from the hinterlands of Arakan, President Roxas and Tulunan towns.

Kapya becomes edible only after a tedious process of squeezing out poison in the crop.

Guillaran said social welfare officers submitted a list of indigenous people who were poisoned by kapya and brought to hospitals. The good news, she said, was that none of the victims died.

Eric Siat, of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples in North Cotabato, said he was not aware that the number of kapya poisoning victims has reached 70.

Siat said reports reaching his office indicated there were only four victims of kapya poisoning since food became scarce in upland villages.

As this developed, the provincial government announced the release of P10 million for the purchase of rice for distribution to communities hurt most by the dry spell.

Gov. Jesus Sacdalan said the amount was enough to buy 8,000 sacks of 50-k rice, which social welfare officials will distribute to 16 towns where food has become scarce.

Sacdalan said based on figures validated by social welfare officials, at least 91,000 families were suffering from the effects of the dry spell in the province.

He said at least 9,000 hectares of rice and corn farms were destroyed. The total amount of damage, Sacdalan said, reached P200 million.

The Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP) of Kidapawan approved on Thursday the release of P7.5 million in calamity funds to help farmers cope with the effects of the dry spell.

Vice Mayor Joseph Evangelista said the SP authorized Mayor Rodolfo Lorenzano to use the funds to purchase rice and corn seeds for distribution to farmers in the city's 40 villages.

The extended drought has started to dry up water sources in many areas in Mindanao, cutting the capacity of power plants that rely on hydropower to generate electricity.

Aside from a power shortage, however, the dry spell has also wreaked havoc on farms around Mindanao. Willamor Magbanua, Inquirer Mindanao

EDUCATION
A father teaches his son (center) to steer their fishing boat (left) near their home in Barangay Bantolil in Bantay, Mountain Province, where residents depend heavily on farming for their livelihood. Many farms in the village are tilted by families who had farmed the land for generations.

This time, disqualification case troubles Bulacan governor

By Carmela Reyes-Estrope
Inquirer Central Luzon

SAN MIGUEL, BULACAN—Gov. Josefina Mendiola's troubles seem to never end.

A day before the Supreme Court ruled with finality to allow him to stay in office on Tuesday, Mendiola faced himself faced a disqualification case in his bid for a congressional seat in Bulacan's third district in the May 10 elections.

Five residents of this town—Melissa Constantino, Crescendo Manzanilla, Rolando Calising, Leocadio de Borda and Rosalina Lazaranes—challenged the governor's candidacy in the certificate of candidacy (COC) that he is a resident of Barangay Tabieas here.

Mendiola resides in Barangay Dulnar in Bocaue town, they said in a petition filed with the Commission on Elections (Comelec). Bocaue belongs to the second district, while San Miguel is part of the third district.

Mendiola dismissed the case as mere harassment, accusing Gov. Rafael Mayor Hizaniño Sy, his congressional rival, of instigating the petition.

One of the documents presented by the complainants was a verification that Mendiola filed before the Supreme Court over the Comelec ruling that barred his gubernatorial rival, former Gov. Roberto Pagdanganan.

"The infrastructure found at Tabieas, San Miguel, was proposed both only to circumvent the constitutional requirement that members of the House of Representatives ... should be residents of the district where they seek election for a period of not less than a year immediately preceding the day of the election," the petition said.

Mendiola said he had his basis for originated from Bocaue, but he claimed he became a village chief in Dulnar before winning the gubernatorial race in 2007.

The law does not prevent him from owning several properties, Mendiola said. His house in Tabieas was built in 2007, he said, after he inherited the property from his late father.

In Calumpit town, the Comelec canceled the CoC of incumbent Daniel Fernando for using his current name instead of his real one in his bid for vice governor. Fernando is the running mate of Lakas-Kampi-CMD gubernatorial candidate, Vice Gov. Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado.

The Comelec's second division, which acted on a petition filed by a Malolos City resident, Ireneo Bacos, said Fernando was registered officially as Oscar Fernando Ramirez, but he filed his candidacy using his stream name.

Fernando said he would elevate the case to the Supreme Court.

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NEWSBRIEFS

■ QUEZON

Solcom's 'peace run'

CAMP MAJOR GENERAL GUILLERMO PACQUIAO (LUZON COMMAND) (Solcom) will sponsor a 42-kilometer bicycle run on April 17, as part of its public campaign for peaceful and honest elections on May 10.

At least 500 bikers from Lucena City and neighboring towns will join the run, which would send a message that "bombs fight."

In February, Solcom initiated the holding of a peace movement among local candidates in Southern Tagalog region, called Lt. General Ernesto Carolina's commander.

Julie T. Mallet-Ur, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Exec loses P320,000

A SUSPECTED ROBBER took P320,000 in a robbery in Batangas City on Lucena City on Wednesday, April 11, Police Senior Supt. Pascual Muñoz, Lucena police chief, said three men showed a motorcycle grabbed a bag with the money, in P20 bills, from Bernard Sanchez and Sharon Santos, driver and staffer of Board Member Ronnie Lubito.

Lubito said the money was for his father's condo advance renewal and payroll of workers.

Julie T. Mallet-Ur, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ MASBATE CITY

De Oro judge fined

THE SUPREME COURT on Monday fined a Cagayan de Oro judge P10,000 for simple misconduct when he dismissed a 2005 Catholic Church land case on a technicality because the lawyer's witnesses to validate testimony.

Judge Maximo Paderanga should have been penalized for gross ignorance of the law if the office of the court administrator had its way because he enforced a mediation deadline on Nov. 4, 2005, which President Macapagal-Arroyo had declared as a nonworking regular holiday to celebrate Hari raya Haji or Feast of Ramadan or Eid'l Adha.

The SC's first division noted that it had already dismissed Paderanga from service on June 19, 2008, after he was found guilty of committing several other administrative infractions.

Paderanga was meditating a mid-case involving a piece of church land that its previous owner had granted to relatives.

Fitzael Calimoso, Inquirer Northern Luzon

■ LAGUNA

Worker electrocuted

A 29-YEAR-OLD worker was electrocuted, while a companion suffered injuries, after they touched a live wire while fixing electrical wiring at the building of a supermarket in Sta. Cruz, Laguna.

Supt. Marvin Soto, Sta. Cruz police chief, said victim Edison Pantalita, a contractual worker of Gombo Supermarket, died on arrival at the Laguna provincial hospital.

Marizar Elasa, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ BATANGAS

1 dead in demolition

A GANG-related shoot-it-out between people were involved in a demolition job at a public market in Cuenca, Batangas, turned violent.

Supt. Rosalio Pamadilo, Batangas police information officer, said Bernardo De Castro, 47, and others after guards from 82nd Corp., were alleged to attacked by a group of workers while setting up a fence at the old public market past 2 a.m. De Castro was stabbed on the chest and died on the spot.

Pamadilo said seven other guards and three workers suffered injuries and were brought to the hospital for treatment.

Marcel Cebu Landa, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ ALBAY

Salceda: Leren is it

GOV. JOEY SALCEDA, one of President Macapagal-Arroyo's closest economic advisers, felt ahead of endorsing Loren Legarda, Nacionalista Party vice presidential candidate, calling her a "social technocrat" for articulating climate change adaptation (CCA) programs in the country.

Legarda was guest at the opening of the Magaso Festival, a health bragfest(s) in the province.

Salceda said Legarda's pursuit of CCA in the Senate and Instead does it initiative.

During her campaign sortie in Bicol, Bikolnisyan, on Black Saturday, Legarda reiterated her stand that the "environment is sujet and survival issue" for many Filipinos.

She vowed to help the provincial government deal with floods caused by the abandoned mines and dams of the Marcopper Mining Corp.

Ray Rosal, Rio Arguelles and Gerald Cinco
Journalists, Inquirer Southern Luzon

SALCEDA and Legarda (shirt print) in Albay's Magayon Festival.

Pangasinan execs ask Comelec: Remove troops now from villages

DAGUPAN CITY—VILLAGE chiefs in the towns of San Manuel and Natividad on Thursday urged the Commission on Elections to immediately pull out Army soldiers from their towns, saying there was no need for the military to be there.

In separate resolutions passed by the towns' Liga ng mga Barangay (Association of Villages) federations, the village chiefs said there are no insurgents in their communities and "thus, there is no reason for the Army to be (there)."

The resolutions were signed by 13 of 14 village chiefs of San Manuel and 12 of 18 village chiefs of Natividad.

"[We] supremely manifest our deepest concern and opposition to the deployment of Army personnel in our respective barangays and (we) hereby request their immediate pullout," the resolutions said.

Dare prosecutors!

Last month, two teams of soldiers from the Army's 7th Infantry Division based in Nueva Ecija were sent to San Manuel and Asingan towns purportedly to secure the San Roque Dam and to run after private armed groups.

Another contingent of soldiers was sent to the eastern Pangasinan town of Natividad on Good Friday.

The fresh deployment, coming [illegible] about 300 soldiers, [illegible] loyalists and even the Comelec, which did not know of the troops' arrival.

The military activity has been fueling suspicions that the soldiers were sent there to ensure the victory of former Armed Forces chief of staff and retired general Fortunato Abat, who is running for reelection against Rep. Gen. Marlyn Primicias-Agabas.

Professionals

Superio denied he had anything to do with the military deployment. "I don't think. But I'm sure I believe that the soldiers, the AFP and PNP are very professional," he said.

He said based on his own research, there has been a history of killings in San Nicolas and San Manuel, and recently, an election summit in Sta. Maria town escalated and wounded.

"If [other] these things have happened, then the deployment must have a reason and it must [illegible] against [illegible] are stated groups. I've been hearing things about those private armed groups. Let's trust the efforts of PNP and AFP," he said.

Lt. Col. Antonio Onap-ong Jr., spokesperson of the Army's 7th Infantry Division based in Nueva Ecija, said the additional troops were sent to run after about 20 unidentified rebels reportedly in the area.

He said Army officials did not seek clearance from the Comelec because their task was part of internal security operations (ISO) campaign plan.

"If it's ISO [related], we do not seek clearance from the Comelec. He just informs them later because it is part of our mandate to run after [communist rebels]," he said.

Military control

He said it was the same ISO that was the basis of the deployment of troops in San Manuel and Asingan last month.

In San Manuel, the soldiers first arrived in Barangay Nagsaag. They eventually moved to Barangays Cabaruan and San Juan.

In Natividad, the soldiers first arrived in Barangay Sibul Mercado Norte. But they eventually moved to Barangays Bacnar for East and Barangay Cabaruan to neighboring San Quirino town.

On Monday, Board Member Alfonso Rivas Jr. said the deployment of Army soldiers in restive Pangasinan towns may be an indication of a plan to place the entire area under military control on Election Day.

Rivas, who represents Pangasinan's sixth district in the provincial board, said this was the first time that Army soldiers were deployed to the different towns of the district. Isabel Gardiner, Inquirer Northern Luzon

PHOTO BY
Mayoress City Mayor Marinosi Braganza, former key member of the Aquino Cabinet, wears ribbon to her joins the campaign sortie of Liberal Party standard bearer Benigno Aquino III in Pangasinan, a significant move seen by many as indication, too, of the quiet support for Aquino by Braganza's former cronies, former President Fidel Ramos.

Execs to tear down illegal poll posters in E. Visayas

By Wenona Lobos
and Joey Gaviola
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE COMmission on Elections would start removing illegal campaign materials throughout Eastern Visayas next week, but was silent on whether it would hold their errant candidates disqualified or even punished.

The campaign, dubbed Operation Baklas, was set to start April 13 as a complement to Tacloban City-pursued its Poster-Free Zone and Mayor Romualdez as among the top violators of the ban on illegal campaign materials in the city.

Lawyer Felicisimo Clemencio, the lone opponent of Romualdez in his bid for another term as congressman of Leyte's first congressional district, filed the complaint, claiming he had documented at least 300 campaign posters of Romualdez outside areas designated by the Comelec as common poster areas.

Clemencio said he was agreeing to an independent, said aside from holding themselves accountable for election offenses, his complaint was his way of "leveling the playing field."

"[Romualdez] is a known and I presume he knows the rules. I want him to comply with the law," Clemencio said on Wednesday.

Romualdez, national vice president for finance of the ruling Lakas-Kampi-CMD, were unaware on the complaint until he received a copy of it.

GMA hometown assures Teodoro of backing

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Reconnoiters that Gilbert Teodoro is the only standard bearer of the Lakas-Kampi-CMD everywhere and on Wednesday kicked the home position of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Although Mr Arroyo was absent, about 1,000 supporters came out for Teodoro at a luncheon here attended by 20 town mayors and his unique supporter of the province's 5th village.

Pampanga Rep. Aurelio Gonzales, the luncheon host, a cousin of the incumbent allies of Mr Arroyo. The venue was Gonzales' ancestral estate and third-degree office.

Among those present were Pampanga Rep. Carmelo Lazatin and former Board Member Lilia Pineda, who is taking a second shot at the governorship.

Late by hour hours, Teodoro arrived in a helicopter at 1:05 p.m.

Local and village officials had waited after Gonzales disappointed hours that the resigned Lakas-Kampi-CMD chair would not show up.

Gonzales said Teodoro came late because the speeches of wounded candidates Bibiano Bello, Lito Lapid and Ruel Lorenzo at the Balanga rally dragged for hours, pushing Teodoro for down the program.

Teodoro's running mate, Rlt. Misamis, arrived together with Cha Lakas wounded vocal Arroyo.

Mr Arroyo's son, outgoing Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo, said the event indicated nothing new.

"That party is solidly behind him [Teodoro]. ... That's the best (and) safest bet. Dr. Philo's a group of party loyalists," he said.

Arroyo, former Lakas-Kampi-CMD chair to General Lorzin, said the party is "all-out for [Teodoro] and nothing is going to change now." Pamela Pintas, Inquirer Central Luzon

More women now working in pocket mines

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—MORE WOMEN are now working in Benguet's pocket mines, a community-old trade that still believes it is bad luck when women enter any mine tunnel.

The growing number of women miners was noted during a session of the Regional Development Council last week.

Environment Secretary Horacio Ramos, who attended the meeting and once served as director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), said the phenomenon is new to the industry and may have to be studied.

Dr. Julie Cabaos, an MGB secretary, said she has been meeting women from nine mines who exhibited allergens common to male pocket miners, such as reactions to mercury.

"The women have been meeting from unqualifiable income to just-gold for themselves or to help process ore dug out of the mines," Cabaos said.

"They are mothers who support their husbands. They help pound the rocks but they will never enter the tunnels..."

Manual work

Gold fineness pan gold from Benguet ores is by manually separating waste materials from the ore using riverbeds.

But small-scale miners have been using tunnels and mercury to quicken the process. The chore has apparently fallen on women.

Cabaos said she had not been informed whether women had already tried their hand in tunneling work.

Also farmers

Many miners now tunneling through mountainsides outside Baguio City are transients from other Benguet towns and the neighboring Mt. Province and Ifugao, he said. Gold is a natural economic attraction, he added.

Records from the Benguet Provincial Treasurer's Office showed that three tons of gold generated from pocket mines had been sold from 2002 to 2007, Ramos said.

In a 2009 paper he presented as a University of the Philippines Diliman fellow on mining, Ramos said small-scale mining had profited for 11 years from P200 billion to accumulate of earnings, which was more than the P68 billion raised by large-scale mining.

But he said if the small-scale mining industry needs to deal with its primary drawback—pocket mining fails to draw capital and hygiene to clear mineral recovery. With reports from Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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GROUP'S LEAST SUMMIT Leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) join hands for the traditional group photo during the opening ceremony of the 14th Asean Summit in Hanoi on Thursday. They are, from left, Laos Prime Minister Bouasone Bouphavanh, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak, Philippine President Gloria Arroyo, Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Thai Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya, Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, Brunei Sultan Haassanal Bolkiah, Burmese Prime Minister Thein Sein, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen and Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. —

Noy to Mar, Chiz: Don't focus on battle next time

From page A1

form of government," he said.

Aquino also said that "the heroes against the change we resist to happen are showing their true Marcos side and their lungs."

He said party members "have reached a level of maturity that we can afford to subsume personal interests because the overriding, personal ambition is to ensure the transition to change."

Task

Tentatives, though, his Team Chiz led by LP-senatorial candidate Sergio Osmeña III and volunteer Lito Banayo, has been in full support of Aquino's candidacy since the start of the campaign period two months ago.

But Gonzales is backing Mar-Leni, Aquino's former floor leader vice president, citing the Roxas camp in the LP.

Team Chiz had claimed it was being snared out of the campaign route, Team Mar had countered that Team Chiz was "toxic" to the LP.

But in a text message, LP campaign manager Sen. Francis Pangilinan said reports that Team Chiz was being hunted out by Team Mar merely indicated "intense organizational gaps that needed addressing so we prepare for the endgame."

"The matter has been *ocular*ly resolved and the needed adjustments have been put in place," Pangilinan said.

'No problem'

At the press conference, Aquino and Roxas took turns assuring the public that all was well between them.

"Mar and I have always been transparent with each other on everything," Aquino said.

Roxas said he had "no problem" with Gonzales's support of Aquino but not himself.

"What is more important is to encourage everyone to support him even though they are supporting other candidates in other posts. This is no secret. I think this is just an arc that was created into a monster," Roxas said, adding:

"Ekwalesin'n'i support is welcome especially in his home province in Escalante, where our surveys show that the source is right."

When asked if he was on good terms with Escalon, Roxas said: "I would assume [so] because when we parted before the adjournment of the Senate session, we were friends. And there is no reason why we cannot be friends."

Escalon himself has refused to comment on the conflict in the party.

More people added

Roxas said the LP needed to fill the space left by Osmeña, who quit as campaign manager to focus on the senatorial candidacy.

He said more people had been added to the campaign team to make it stronger in the run-up to the May elections.

Aquino confirmed that Osmeña's old post as campaign manager and media coordinator had been taken over by former publicist Benny Gonzales.

But he said this would not affect the role of Team Chiz and his camp staff led by TV director Mario Montelibano, which Aquino considers to focus on his presidential campaign.

Aquino said he had insisted on keeping his own team in the campaign outside of the party's main campaign unit led by Roxas' men.

"I'm comfortable with all these people for my media needs. I can't work with only Kalday de Leyda. Dun *chief* media handler in the Senate," he said, adding that his campaign was "media-centric rather *sobra* centric".

Despite the purported cracks in the LP campaign, Aquino described his barely created team as better than the opposition.

He cited the results of the *tao po* surveys conducted in the last seven months, with the Aquino-Roxas duos in the top spot.

LP 'crumbling'

Hearing to express that Team Chiz had been booted out of the LP campaign, Mayor Binay said this would hurt the party's goal of taking Malacañang.

"It's sad [that the LP]. They are crumbling while our forces are helping consolidate because of our improving ratings in the surveys. So they have a problem there," the running mate of Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino standard-bearer Joseph "Erap" Estrada said in Zamboanga City.

Binay defended Escalon's reported decision to back him, and not Roxas, in the vice presidential race.

He said he and Escalon had been through a lot together since they worked for the presidential candidacies of the late action star Fernando Poe Jr. in 2004.

Like a son

"Because Chiz is not just like a son to me," Binay said. "He's also my godson because I stood as one of the principal sponsors at his wedding."

Binay said that when Poe suffered a fatal brain attack during a gathering of friends and political supporters in December 2004, "I was at his right and Chiz was at his left."

"He had to die doing that [stroke in] speech," he said.

Binay said Escalon was not obligated to support all of the LP candidates, including Roxas, because he was not a party member.

He said he was "confident" of victory "because the people support the group of Erap and the group of Binay."

'That's how it is'

Estrada was unfazed that certain people were for Binay but not necessarily for him. He said he had gotten used to such circumstances during his 35 years in politics.

"This can't prevent that from happening. There are also those who support Erap-Loren [Legarda], Lacson-Legarda, the running mate of Nacionalista Party standard-bearer Sen. Manuel Villar, Gringada said.

"That's how it is. It is just natural, though. Of course, there are those who can't say no to Binay," he said. With reports from Norman Bordadora

SC lets Ladlad do what Comelec denied it: To run for election

From page A1

ber 11, 2009, and Dec. 17, 2009, which denied Ang Ladlad accreditation "until the time comes when it is able to justify that its having raised sexual orientation and transgender identities is beneficial to the country."

The Comelec resolutions became controversial because they cited passages from the Bible and the Koran to argue against accrediting Ang Ladlad.

Reached for comment, Ang Ladlad founding chair Danton Remoto said the high court's decision "let fairness and truth prevail" regarding the candidacies of the Filipino LGBT sector.

"We are happy and are because the Supreme Court recognized that our petition to be listed in the party-list race did not violate the Constitution and that we cannot be precluded from participating based on religious grounds," Remoto said in a phone interview.

He said Ang Ladlad could have gotten the Comelec's go-signal had Commissioners Lucenito Tagle and Elias Yusoph, a Catholic lay minister and Muslim cleric, respectively, inhibited themselves from endorsing its application to be accredited as a party-list group.

Puno's separate opinion

Ang Ladlad, which claims that about 10 percent of the Philippine population belongs to the LGBT sector, took its case to the Supreme Court in January.

Until the high court "So far as this court is concerned, our democracy precludes using [religious or moral views of one part of the community] to criminalize or to impose [such views] on the values of other members of the community."

In a separate concurring opinion, Chief Justice Reynato Puno said: "The Comelec attempts to disengage itself from this 'sectarian entanglement' with religion by arguing that 'we cannot ignore our strict religious upbringing, whether Christian or Muslim, since the moral precepts espoused by [those] religious have shaped Philippine law and serve public life accepted moral norms.'

"However ... the Philippines has not seen fit to impinge homosexual conduct as to actually criminalize it ... Those alleged 'personally accepted public morals' have not, in reality, ensued over from the religious to the secular sphere."

But the high court said its ruling did not suggest "the impending arrival of a golden age for gay rights in [spain]."

It added: "We do not suggest that public opinion, even if it were liberal, reflect a clean-cut

consensus favorable to gay rights claims. And we are deeply unwilling to impose our own individual perceptions of homosexuality through fiat decision."

The high court said "not everything that society—or a majority of society—wants or demands is substantially a fundamental right."

"We cannot help but observe that the social issues presented by this case are emotionally charged, political intrudes and, in fact, even the psychiatric and religious communities are divided in opinion" regarding the Ang Ladlad case, it said.

'Marginalized' sectors

The Comelec had argued that a homosexual sector was not among the marginalized sectors in 1987 Constitution and Republic Act No. 7941, the party-list law.

The marginalized sectors listed by the law are the poor, peasants, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, women, youth, veterans, labor, fish, elderly, handicapped, overseas workers and professionals.

Noting this, the dissenting justices said they believed that the decision should have focused on how the Constitution and RA 7941 define "marginalized sectors."

In his dissenting opinion, Associate Justice Renato Corona said: "Even assuming that [Ang Ladlad] was able to show that the LGBT community is underrepresented, it cannot be properly considered as marginalized in the party-list system. First, petitioner is not included in the sectors mentioned in Section 5[1], Article VI of the Constitution and Section 5 of RA 7941.

"Second, petitioner's interest as a sector, which is basically the legal recognition of its members' sexual orientation as a right, cannot be reasonably considered as an interest that is traditionally and historically considered as vital to national interest.

"Third, petitioner is cut off from common constitutional thread that runs through the marginalized and underrepresented sectors under the party-list system.

"Finally, considering our history and traditions as a people, to consider the promotion of the homosexual agenda and 'gay rights' as a national policy as beneficial to the nation as a whole is debatable at best."

Entitled to protection

But Puno said: "It would not be difficult to conclude that gay persons are entitled to basic constitutional protection despite some recent political progress. The discrimination they have suffered has been so pervasive and extreme—from the unlikely that legislative enactments alone will suffice to eliminate that discrimination.

"To so far as the [gay] community plays a role in the political process, it is apparent that their members suffer from obvious small and insular minority and are, therefore, marginalized," he said.

Remoto, a professor of English literature at the Ateneo de Manila University, said he appreciated the high court's stance that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights also applied to the LGBT sector.

On Facebook, Remoto wrote: "Ang Ladlad wins in the Supreme Court. We can now in the ballots. This is history in the making. Many many many thanks to all who helped to show the Comelec we are not immoral ... What's immoral is the ballot secrecy holder chair's P200-each, right?"

Full-blast campaign

Remoto also said the ruling was "definitely a big boost" to Ang Ladlad's campaign for the party-list elections.

"Our campaign can now go full-blast, particularly in areas in urban centers and adjacent areas where support for us is strong," he said, indicating that the plans for Metro Manila, Metro Baguio, Metro Cebu, Metro Davao, and the cities of Iloilo, Bacolod and Legazpi.

Remoto said that like other party-list groups, Ang Ladlad was facing funding problems compounded by the constraints with only a month to go before elections.

He said other Ladlad officials as well as members had to go to the provinces individually so that they could cover more areas.

No party stand

Remoto said certain candidates, including those running for president or senator, had been soliciting Ang Ladlad's endorsement but the group is still finishing and help its establishing a big campaign machinery.

"We don't have a party stand yet on who to endorse. I don't know if we'll ever have one because many of us have feelings, affiliations with friends," he said.

Ang Ladlad's nominees are Benni Bonolllo, Germaine Lozada, Chris Lopera, Nanette Fontanoza and Gender Macabilo.

Remoto, who failed in his run in 2007 for a House seat representing a district of Quezon City, is prohibited under election law from becoming a nominee for the 2010 polls.

'Jueteng' tip: 8 (Gibo) 5 (Edu) to win big over '1-2'

From page A1

jokes and added to jueteng inspired statements during a Lakas-Kampi assembly here on Wednesday.

In a caucus attended by the members and organized by Bunawan Rep. Aurelio Gonzales, the caucus reminded the gathering of lawyers and village chiefs about the combination "8" for "Teodoro and "5" for Manuel.

The local executives happen to supervise areas where online numbering games are decided.

Gonzales, the administration party's district chief, said allied local officials were expected to "take care" of Teodoro's campaign to limit aggressive acts since they had said Teodoro's camp is "not playing fair."

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Bunawan Rep. Joaquin Chipeco Jr. and Agusan del Sur Gov. Rodolfo Plaza, who are both running for reelection, are also known to be supporters of Teodoro.

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Once in spotlight, Estrada now craves more coverage

By Christian V. Esguerra

HEY, WHAT ABOUT ME?

Former President Joseph Estrada isn't happy with the way media has been covering his second crack at the presidency with a month to go before election day.

Estrada yesterday complained that media coverage was largely focused on Benigno Aquino III of the Liberal Party (LP) and Manuel Villar of the Nacionalista Party (NP), both of whom lead the surveys.

"It's really terrible," Estrada said in the Tagalog over the phone.

He said Aquino was getting all the media attention because he was being backed by the Lopez family of network giant ABS-CBN. His sister, Kris Aquino, is a prized talent of the network.

As for Villar, he said, the senator began his campaign two years ago and has "lots of campaign money."

"I am the underdog here," said Estrada, bringing to mind the character of the downtrodden ruler he used to play in the movies.

"But my situation now is different. This is politics, not the movies. He can never sell," he said.

Estrada told ABS-CBN refused to air his ads, some of which would have shown former President Corazon Aquino, mother of the LP candidate, apologizing in lieu for having supported Edsa II in 2001.

Estrada was impeached by the House of Representatives and was undergoing trial in the Senate for plunder when the people took to Edsa to demand his ouster after two years and six months in office.

Estrada said he was heartened by the rise in his ratings in the latest Pulse Asia survey, which was topped by Aquino with 37 percent. Estrada's 26 percent put him in third place behind Villar who got 33 percent.

More time, more votes

He said he could catch up to the survey leaders if he had an extra month to campaign.

"Kulang kapanin sa oras. (I might run out of time)," he said.

But as far as number of spokespersons goes, Estrada has trumped everyone else, including President Macapagal-Arroyo who succeeded him.

Estrada has hired a total of six spokespersons for his campaign, beating Ilda Marcos who only had four.

Last year, the President had a record six spokespersons tasked mainly with rebutting critics over issues such as her plan to run for Congress.

The latest additions to Estrada's army of spokespersons were senatorial bet Jinggoy de Mesa and outgoing mayor Jejomar Binay of Makati, his son, and Tolentino Tiangco of Navotas. The others are Jimmy Mercado, Margaux Salcedo and Ralph Calderon.

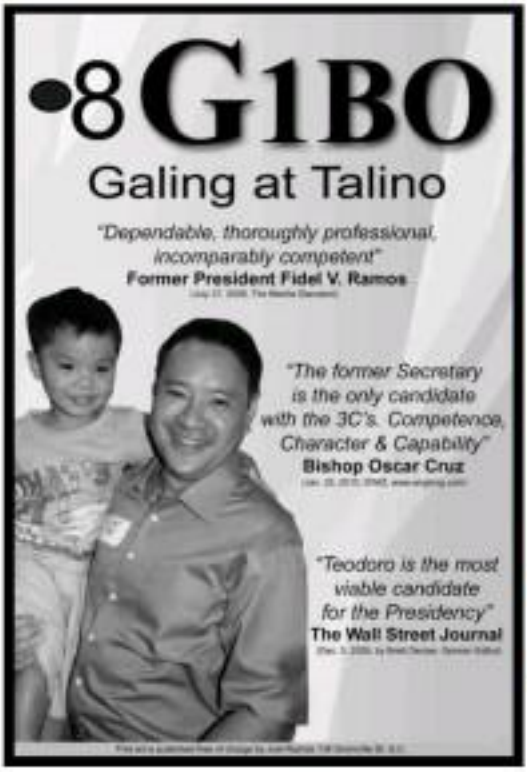
Automation main issue

Dr. Mercado told reporters on Wednesday he was tapped to speak only on the poll automation issue, owing to his background in information technology. He had spelled the issue on the questionable $329-million Venezuelan Broadband Network project of the government after his company failed to land the deal.

"He's not mute on his ex-poll automation is concerned because he's an expert in that," Estrada told the reporters.

But a member of Estrada's campaign said Dr. Mercado's new job was meant to give him more media exposure and boost his chances of winning a spot in the Magic 12.

"He ranks between 12th and 15th place and they must hire to get in," the source, who sought anonymity for lack of authority to speak, told the Inquirer.



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DID YOU KNOW

THERE are 124 stained glass windows in Manila Cathedral, 30 of which are in the central nave. These windows show a pictorial history of Christianity.
Cyril L. Bonalaan, Inquirer Research

Fruites
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ERWIN Gardoga holds on to the arm of his brother Edwin who drowned in a basement filled with floodwaters inside a building in Binondo, Manila. Ace Morandante

Woman loses 3 sons in a day

By Joannette I. Andrade

A WOMAN THE OTHER DAY lost three of her sons in an abandoned building in Manila whose pitch-black basement was still filled with floodwaters brought by Tropical Storm "Onday."

Edilito Gardoga, 44, was inconsolable when divers from the Philippine Coast Guard, backed up by rescue teams from the Bureau of Fire Protection, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and Manila City Hall, brought up the bodies of her sons aboveat 24 hours after they went missing in the basement of the Casino Depot Building at the corner of Ylaneta and Badoc Streets in Binondo.

Mario Gardoga, 21, was the first victim. His brothers Arnulfo, 20, and Edwin, 24, died trying to save him. A fourth brother, Bernardo, survived. He also attempted to

WOMAN A24

BIR takes over Makati's assets for unpaid taxes

By Miko Morales and Ronnel W. Domingo

MAKATI CITY HALL: FOR RENT

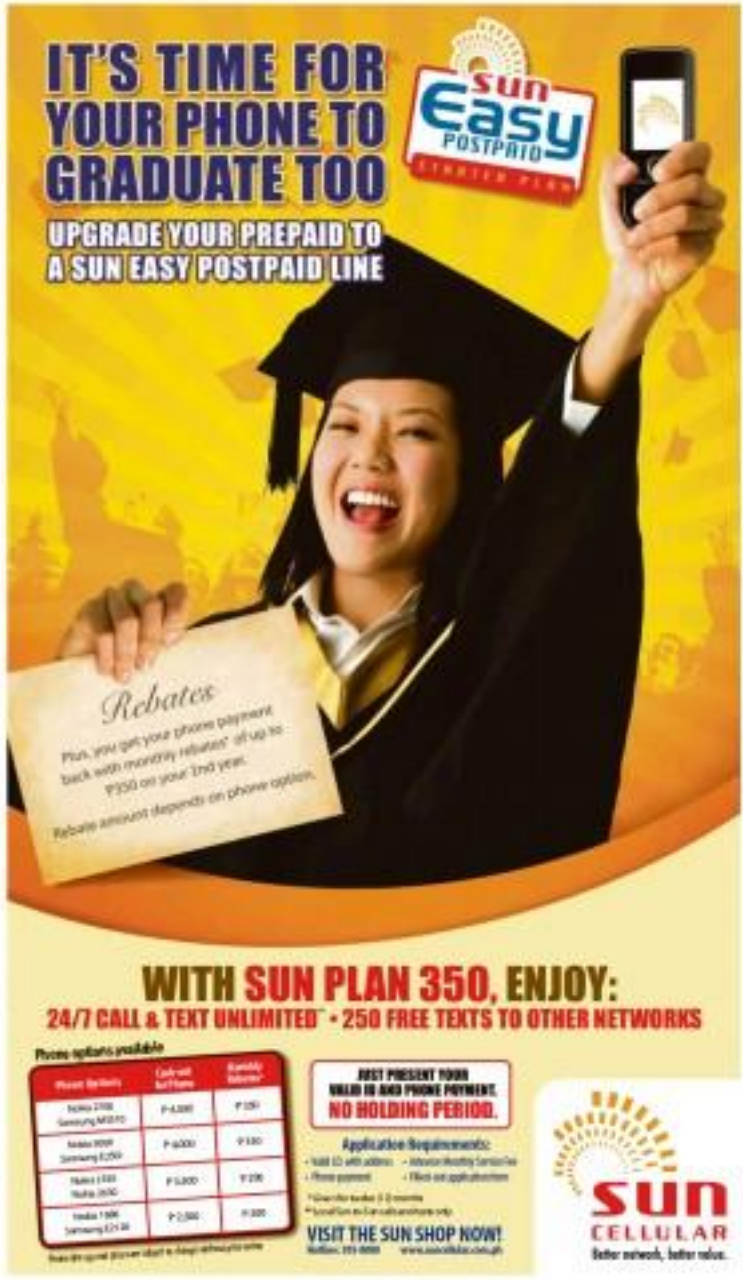
This possibility loomed as the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) yesterday seized control of the fixed assets of Makati, one of the economy's richest cities, for allegedly failing to pay P1.2 billion in taxes from 1999 to 2004.

While he declined to elaborate as to what pieces of property would be seized, revenue district chief Edwin Guzman hinted that the 22-story building housing the Makati City Hall could be taken over by the bureau and a rental scheme could be crafted to generate earnings.

Revenue Commissioner Jose L. Tan Torres said the BIR lodged a warrant of distraint and levy to the city's Register of Deeds after talks on a possible settlement failed.

City Hall's "offer [for settlement] was very insignificant compared to the amounts involved," Tan Torres said. He would not say how much the offer was, but sources

BIR A24



PNP chief orders probe of Medel's death

By DJ Yap and Alcuin Papa

ANOTHER CHAPTER OF THE Nida Blanca murder mystery ended on Wednesday night with the death of Philip Medel who survived to his grave when could be the only hope of finding one who really killed the actress.

The 62-year-old Medel, one of the primary suspects in Blanca's killing, died at 8:05 p.m. from "sepsis (blood poisoning) secondary to pneumonia" after a two-day confinement in the medication ward of the Pasig City General Hospital, Dr. Alice Ursua added.

"He was gasping for air. He had a lot of difficulty breathing," the doctor told the hounds on the phone.

The Philippine National Police (PNP), however, ordered a thorough investigation into Medel's death, saying at least reasons to doubt that he died of natural causes.

PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Leonardo Espina said PNP chief Director General Jesus Verzosa gave the order in Eastern Police District (EPD) head Chief Supt. Benjardi Mateo.

The hospital where Medel died is in Pasig City—that's in under the EPD's jurisdiction.

"We are considering all possible angles to cross all doubts," Espina told reporters.

He added, "It is imperative we know the reasons behind his death ... The PNP chief wants to know why the suspects [in the Nida Blanca case] are all dying."

Espina noted that Rod Bernardo Alamo's husband and former primary suspect in Red's murder, died under mysterious circumstances in Caliraya Lake in Laguna province years ago.

If Medel did not die of natural causes, Espina said, they would conduct an investigation to get the issue to rest, adding, "If it is revealed he really died of natural causes, then so be it."

"Until we know the real reason, we will not rest on this story," Espina stressed.

Blanca, bounty hunter-in-real life, was bludgeoned and stabbed to death on Nov. 6, 2005, in the parking lot of Atlanta Center in Greenhills, San Juan City.

The PNP formed Task Force Blanca (named after Blanca's character in the TV comedy series "John and Marsha") to investigate her death. It was headed by Verzosa who was then deputy director for operations and now Regional Director of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG). At that time, Espina was the chief of the CIDG's Intelligence Division.

Medel first came to the public eye on Nov. 19, 2005, when he surrendered to investigators and confessed to the actress' murder, implicating Sosaki as the mastermind. But he recanted his confession a few days later, saying he and another suspect, Mike Martinez, had been tortured by Espina to own up the crime.

The bid to frame Espina failed. Medel died still against Medel. "I don't even know him. I'm glad ... but we were optimistic the case would make in one piece on the filed cases," Espina said.

The third suspect, Martinez, has gone missing.

Before he could be charged, Medel left for the United States in 2002 to visit his ailing mother. He never returned to the Philippines although murder charges were eventually filed against him.

However, he successfully evaded extradition from the US after Medel received his statement.

Sosaki died in July 2007 after falling from a two-story motel in Tracy, California where the police discovered a suicide.

Dr. Custodio, who looked after Medel, said officials of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology had told him that Medel had been weak for two months and would refuse to eat.

"He was also coughing all the time," he added.

Medel had been detained since 2005 in the PNP Custodial Jail in Camp Panganiban, where he was monitored and interviewed from the middle of the National Bureau of Investigation.

Roads under repair along Edsa today

By Mike Morales

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS ON Edsa began last night in anticipation of the reclosed volume in traffic today, a public holiday, according to the Metro Manila Development Authority.

Two sections at the northbound part of Edsa were closed to traffic in connection with the weekly repairs undertaken by the Department of Public Works and Highways.

A portion of the yellow lane near Welcome mall in Quezon City was sealed off to vehicles last night, said Joy Tripa, of the MMDA's traffic engineering center.

The second lane of the service road from Pioneer Road to Shaw Boulevard in Mandaluyong City is also under repair.

METROBRIEFS

Man at wake killed in Marikina fire

ARIEL LEDILY man who was keeping watch over his dead sister died after he was trapped in his burning house in Marikina City yesterday. Fire officers said the blaze started at 12:30 a.m. in the house of Ben Cordoya at President Manuel Quezon Industrial Valley Subdivision, Industrial Valley Complex. The origin of the fire is still under investigation. The fire department placed the damage at P100,000. Witnesses said that the only person in the house were the victim, who was in his 60s, and a maid identified only as Precy. Both were watching over the coffin of the victim's sister, Betty Sison, when the fire broke out. Sison's body, which was stored before the fire spread, was retrieved by the victim's officers relatives. The maid managed to escape and her whereabouts remain unknown, the investigator said. The fire reached the second storey and was put out at 1:20 a.m.

DJ Yap and Cris Maria Rosas, contributor

Manila bank thieves go home empty-handed

SUSPECTED ARMED robbers who broke into a branch of Metrobank in Binondo, Manila, before dawn yesterday went home almost empty-handed. Except for P1,000 in cash and a cell phone owned by one of the bank managers, nothing else was stolen from Asia United Bank (AUB) after the neighboring Bank of the Philippine Islands branch on Ronquillo-Fuentes Street. PO2 Panganiban Pangandaig of the Manila Police District's Station 11 said the break-in probably took place between midnight and 5 a.m. yesterday. He added that the thieves entered through the second-floor windows of the banks which were built beside each other. All 38 security guard Richard Gaino called up the police at 8 a.m. public safety officers found the bank and nine cubicles ransacked and drawers in disarray, with their contents scattered all over the establishment. No inventory showed that the bank manager lost P1,000 in cash which she kept in her drawer along with a cell phone. Nothing was missing at the neighboring bank. "The robbers were still able to get into the cash vaults of the banks," the police probe said.

Jeannette Andrade

Aliwan Festival to kick off on April 22

PASAY City will host this year's Aliwan Fiesta on April 22 to 24. A project of Manila Broadcasting Co. and the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the annual summer extravaganza features street dancers, floral displays and festival costumes from the different regions in competition. MBC president Rupert Nicolas Jr. said that this year, the fiesta will still have a one-peso admission but does not the SM Mall of Asia and ends in front of Aliwan Theater at the CCP Complex. For details, visit http://www.aliwanfiesta.com.ph

Atienza supporters file suit vs 2 Manila policemen

By Tina G. Santos

SUPPORTERS OF MANILA mayoral candidate Lito Atienza, who were detained Tuesday following a brawl with followers of Vice Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso over campaign posters, yesterday filed a complaint against a police officer and one of his men who arrested and filed charges against them.

Charged in the Office of the Ombudsman with illegal arrest, arbitrary detention, grave misconduct, discrimination and grave neglect of official functions were Chief Insp. Marvin Reyes, head of the General Assignment Section of the Manila Police District, and case investigator PO3 Abelardo Aguilar.

The complaint, filed by a complainant identified as police officer and one of his men who arrested and filed charges against them.

Charged in the Office of the Ombudsman with illegal arrest, arbitrary detention, grave misconduct, discrimination,

Kyrgyz president flees; opposition seizes power

BISHKEK—KYRGYZSTAN'S OPposition said on Thursday it had taken power and dissolved parliament in the poor but strategically important Central Asian state after deadly protests forced President Kurmanbek Bakiyev to flee the capital.

Roza Otunbayeva, leader of the interim government, demanded the resignation of the president, whom she helped bring to power five years ago. She said Bakiyev was trying to rally supporters in his power base in southern Kyrgyzstan.

"People in Kyrgyzstan want to build democracy. What we did yesterday was our answer to the repression and tyranny against the people by the Bakiyev regime," Otunbayeva, who once served as foreign minister under Bakiyev, told reporters.

"We can call this revolution. You can call this a people's revolt. Either way, it is our way of saying that we want justice and democracy."

The uprising, which spread to Bishkek on Wednesday a day after starting in a provincial town, was sparked by discontent over corruption, nepotism and rising prices in a nation where a third of the 5.3 million population live below the poverty line.

The United States has a military air base supporting troops in Afghanistan in the Kyrgyz city of Manas and is a major donor to Kyrgyzstan, along with China and Russia, which also has a military base in the former Soviet state.

Otunbayeva said the new government would preserve an agreement allowing the US base to operate.

"In states ops will remain in place. We still have some questions on it. Give us time and we will listen to all the sides and solve everything," she said.

The White House said US President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev were likely to discuss the situation when they meet in Prague to sign an arms control treaty later on Thursday.

Bakiyev fled Bishkek in southern Kyrgyzstan, his traditional power base in a nation split by clan rivalries. A witness said he arrived late on Wednesday at the airport in Osh, and Otunbayeva said later he was in his home region of Jalalabad.

"He asked to negotiate his resignation," she said. "His business here is over ... The people who were killed here yesterday are the victims of his regime."

She said the interim country was under the control of the interim government, except for Osh and Jalalabad. Armored forces and border guards supported the new government, she said.

Reuters

OTUNBAYEVA

MOUNT Everest seen from The Kalapatar Plateau some 140 kilometers northeast of Katmandu.

What is Everest's exact height? China, Nepal find solution to dispute

KATMANDU—CHINA AND NEPAL HAVE found a solution to a longstanding dispute over the height of Mount Everest in the spirit peak's 60th and 100th years.

The world's highest mountain lies on the border between the two countries and they have disagreed for years over its exact height, which Nepal puts at 8,848 metres (29,029 feet)—nearly four meters more than the measurement used by China.

Officials from the two neighbors reached a compromise at talks in Katmandu this week by agreeing the two measurements referred to different things—one to the height of Everest's rock and the other to the height of its snowcap.

"The Chinese side—led by Li Qingquan—accepted Nepal's claim that the exact height of Sagarmatha (Everest) is 8,848 meters, while the Nepali side recognized the Chinese claim that the rock height of the mountain is 8,844.43 meters," a senior official at Nepal's Department of Surveys told the Kantipuchi Post daily.

Thousands of people have climbed Mount Everest since the first ascent in 1953 by Sherpa Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary, but its exact height has been a source of dispute ever since the first measurements was made in 1856.

The broadly accepted height of 8,848 metres was first determined by an Indian survey in 1955, and remained the mountain's snow cap, rather than the rock beneath it.

Geologists believe Everest is growing as India is gradually pushed beneath China and Nepal by the shifting of the continental plates.

In May 1999 an American expedition used GPS technology to measure a height of 8,850 metres, and this figure is now used by the US National Geographic Society, although it has not been officially accepted by Nepal. AFP

Obama goes to Prague to push vision of a nuke arms-free world

PRAGUE—PUSHING HIS VIsion of a nuclear weapons-free world, President Barack Obama was set to sign a pivotal treaty aimed at sharply paring US and Russian arsenals—and repairing soured relations between the nations.

On a sunny morning, Obama landed in the Czech capital after an overnight flight from Washington. His primary mission: seal the landmark arms reduction deal with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and signal progress in a troubling world.

Obama has not been able to deliver on all of the nuclear aspirations he outlined in Prague just a year ago—Obama on disarmament that helped earn him the Nobel Peace Prize. Such then, a landmark speech in an enthusiastic crowd gathered in a Prague square included a promise to quickly seek ratification of a comprehensive nuclear test ban.

That goal remains unfulfilled. But on Thursday the Czech capital will serve as the venue of a pledge affirmed.

At noon in the Spanish Hall—a lavish Renaissance chamber within the Castle's capital's ornate presidential castle complex—the US and Russian presidents will sign the "New START" treaty.

With that, they will commit their nations to slash the number of strategic nuclear warheads by one-third and more than halve the number of missiles, submarines and bombers carrying them, pending ratification by their legislatures.

The new treaty will shrink those warheads to 1,550 over seven years. That will allows for mutual destruction several times over. But it will send a strong signal that Russia and the US, which between them own more than 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons, are not out about disarmament.

The treaty would then need to be ratified by the US Senate and Russia's legislature.

It opens the way for further cuts. US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Tuesday that Obama has instructed his national security team to pursue another round of arms reduction talks with Russia, to follow up on the replacement for the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty being signed Thursday.

The aim would be to conduct wider talks to include for the first time short-range US and Russian nuclear weapons as well as weapons held in reserve or in storage.

Beyond deeply reducing nuclear arsenals, the US sees "New START" as a key part of efforts to "reset" ties with Russia, which had become badly strained under the Bush administration and angered Moscow more in dealing with global challenges. Among those is Iran's defiance of UN Security Council demands that it curb its nuclear program in case from it seeks to make nuclear arms.

The new pact is only part of the Obama administration's new nuclear strategy it will be signed only days after the White House announced a fundamental shift that calls the spread of atomic weapons to terrorists or rogue states—unless, like North Korea or Iran that do not abide by nonproliferation rules—a worse warrant than the Cold War threat of mutual destruction.

"For the first time, preventing nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism is now at the top of [America's] national agenda," Obama said Sunday in detailing key components of an in-depth nuclear posture review. AP

WORLDBRIEFS

Abuse case forced bishop in Norway to quit in '09

HONG—In May, the leader of central Norway's small Roman Catholic population resigned abruptly amid little explanation. The Vatican on Wednesday said why: He sexually abused a boy in the early 1980s.

It was the latest case to emerge in a church sexual-abuse scandal that has been churning through Europe in recent months, putting the Vatican on the defensive and forcing bishops across the continent to confront the issue.

The bishop, Georg Mueller, 58, who left his diocese in June, has since undergone therapy and "no longer carries out pastoral activity," according to a statement by the New Trondheim Cathedral, the Vatican spokesman.

Reporting quickly to a Norwegian press report, Lombardi said that after the abuse came to the attention of church authorities in January 2008, it was handled "with capability" in a process overseen by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome. Pope Benedict XVI accepted the bishop's resignation "in a timely manner," the spokesman said. AYT

Freighter on Great Barrier Reef has punctured fuel tank

HONG KONG—A Chinese coal freighter aground on the Great Barrier Reef has at least one punctured fuel tank, prompting a delicate effort to transfer oil within the ship to tanks that are still intact, Australian officials announced on Wednesday.

Very little oil has leaked yet because sea water has surged through the underwater punctures and the oil has floated up on the water inside at least one tank, officials said. Two megaleaks are trying to stabilize the vessel, the Shen Neng 1, as it grinds up and down on a shoal in ocean swells sent as salvage experts transfer the fuel between tanks.

"This is actually a delicate operation, and we aren't be rushing it," said Patrick Quirk, the general manager for maritime safety for Queensland, the Australian state where the vessel ran aground. He added that a specialized salvage vessel would start trying to unload fuel from the vessel on Thursday or Friday.

The vessel went aground with 1,075 tons of thick engine fuel. Officials declined to estimate how much was in danger of leaking. AYT

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The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Greco

Protesters defy Thai emergency decree

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S GOVERNMENT BLOCKED OPPOSITION websites and its prime minister canceled an overseas trip on Thursday, a day after a state of emergency was declared to quell mass protests that have plagued Bangkok since mid-March.

Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva called off a one-day visit to Vietnam for a fourhour dawn briefing with senior ministers remained high, with "red shirt" protesters vowing defiance.

On Wednesday they had stormed parliament, forcing officials to flee by helicopter and triggering an emergency decree that gives the military broad powers to control unrest.

Despite that decree, the red-shirted supporters of twice-elected and now fugitive former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra ignored orders to leave the capital's main shopping districts and promised to stage their biggest rally yet on Friday.

The risk of a confrontation escalated Thailand's recently lost sixth number, which pointed to biggest fall in more than two months, losing more than two percent and underperforming its Asian peers on Thursday. The local baht currency was also weaker.

In another sign of heightened risk, the cost of insuring Thailand's debt against default climbed to a five-week high. "The political front will be a major issue of the Thai market today and we need to watch it closely," said Sureeda Chaweewigrong, an analyst at brokerage firm Phillip Securities.

Abhisit faces a difficult choice: compromise and call an election he could easily lose or launch a crackdown on some of thousands of protestors that could stir up even more trouble.

Most analysts doubt the authorities will use force to remove the mostly re-

Aki-antiguo-woman protester offers a traditional greeting during a rally on April 3 in Bangkok. AFP

nd and wording class "red shirt" protesters who have been camped in Bangkok's shopping district since Saturday—a politically risky decision for Abhisit as his 16-month-old coalition government struggles to build support outside Bangkok.

The protest in the upmarket district of malls and luxury hotels, an area with plenty of symbolism in a country with one of Asia's largest disparities between rich and poor, has also drawn large numbers of families, complicating any crackdown.

The number of protesters in the district was growing steadily, reaching about 6,000 in the sweltering midday sun.

Numbers typically swell into the tens of thousands in the cooler evenings in a carnival-like atmosphere.

But pressure is growing on Abhisit from members in Bangkok, a stronghold of his Democrat Party, to take decisive action to end the nearly month-long rolling protests, which began on March 14 when up to 100,000 massed in the city's old quarter.

"Abhisit has been accused of finding it difficult to make decisions and he seems to be struggling here somewhat. But it is a difficult position. There's become cast involved," said Jimmy Richards, senior Asia editor at the Economist Intelligence Unit.

The decree allows authorities to suspend certain civil liberties, ban public gatherings of more than five people and stop media reporting news that "causes panic." Abhisit assured the public on Wednesday that the emergency wouldn't be used to impose a crackdown. Reuters

Experts explain psychology of Iraq air strike on video

THE SIGHT OF HUMAN BEINGS, MOST OF them unarmed, being gunned down from above is gripping indeed.

But for many people who watched the video of a 2007 assault by an Army Apache helicopter in Baghdad, released Monday by WikiLeaks.org, the most disturbing detail was the cockpit chatter. The soldiers joked, chuckled and jeered as they shot people in the street, including a Reuters photographer and driver, before firing them to the insurgents.

"Look at those dead bastards," one said. "Nice," another responded.

In recent days, many veterans have made the point that fighters cannot do their job without creating psychological distance from the enemy. One reason that the soldiers swooned as if they were playing a video game is that, in a sense, that has necessary sense, they were.

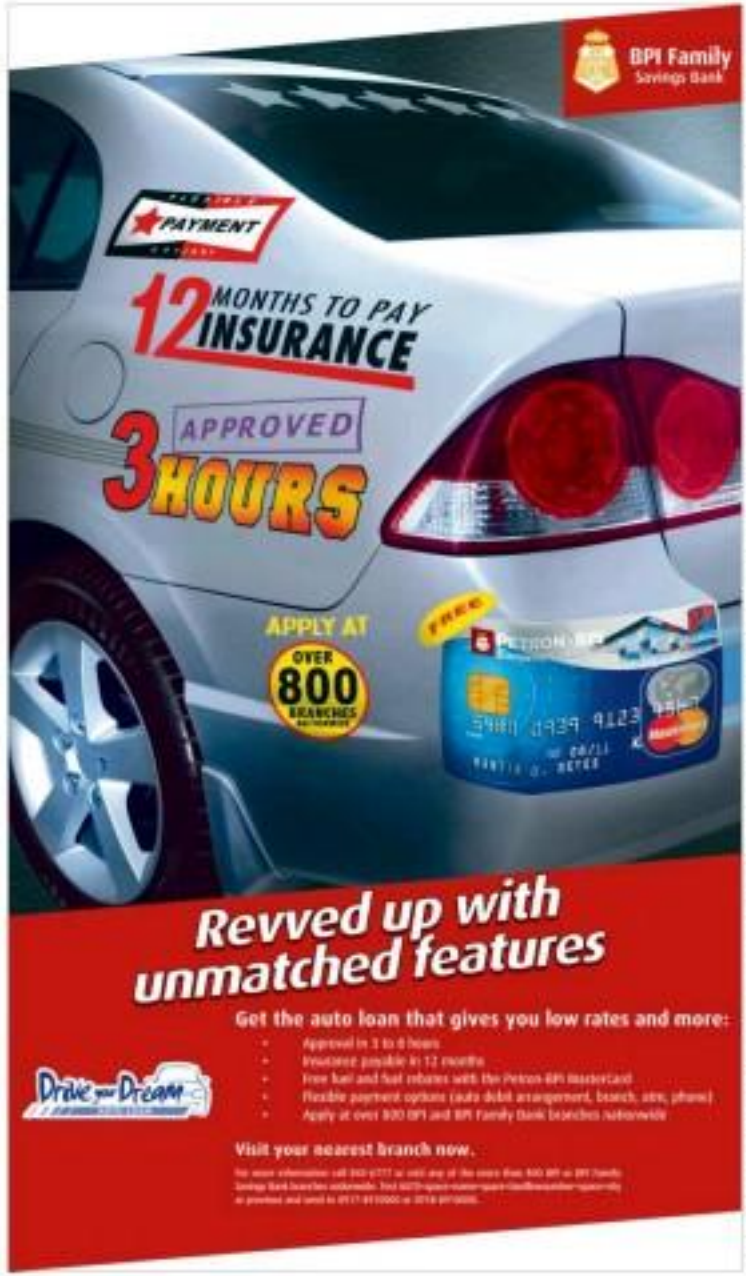
"You don't want combat soldiers to be hesitate or to jump the gun, but their job is to destroy the enemy, and one way they're able to do that is to see it as game, so that the people don't seem real," said Bret A. Moore, a former Army psychologist and co-author of the forthcoming book, "Warrior Heart: Adjustment After Deployment."

Military training is fundamentally an exercise in overcoming a fear of killing another human, said Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, author of the book "On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society," who is a former Army Ranger.

Combat training "is the only archetype that will reliably influence the primitive, midbrain processing of a frightened human being" to take another life, the colonel writes. "Conditioning in flight simulators enables pilots to respond reflexively to emergency situations even when frightened."

The men in the Apache helicopter in the video flew into an area that was being controlled, during a broader conflict in which a number of helicopters had been shot down.

The fighters in the helicopter are over the ranks that they are sure they are a "weapon," even though the Reuters photographer, Namir Noor-Eldeen, is carrying a camera. AFP



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SPORTS

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- **Woods** gets scolding as Masters blasts off/A30

Llamados seek 2nd win vs Air21

YAP Derby duo ear top balloting

YOUNG: He could get the boss

By Marang R. Castillo

KEEGAN YOUNG TRIES TO JUSTIFY HIS worth as an able reinforcement when Air21 takes on a confident Derby Ace squad looking for a second straight PBA Fiesta Conference win today at the Ginebra Antonio Gym.

Against the Llamados in the 7:30 p.m. game, Young will have to step up against veterans Wesley Gonzalez and Jayjay Helterbrand and Eric Menk, and Air21 coach Jamike Jarin is expected to rotate out Junior and Jaypee Belencion, Ecoward Ablan for Derby duo on Wednesday.

Although putting impressive credentials, Young has played below expectations that the Express, who lost two of their first three games, had allowed Jason Perte to try out last week.

San Miguel Beer shoots for a third consecutive victory earlier at 5 p.m. against struggling Barako Coffee.

The defending champion Beermen are table-set pick to meet the Coffee Masters, who dropped their last three games after an opening day win with Sammy Mension failing to draw enough local support.

Meanwhile, Instructor Sec. Nikki Gunning, daughter of PBA founding president and Hortencian owner Erwinson Gunning, will grace today's double header as the league marks its 35th anniversary.

Gunning, who once served as the league's first ever woman team manager, has been invited as special guest and will do the ceremonial toss for the Derby Ace-Air21 game.

Some of the players from both Hortencian Starmate and Concepcion Carrier, which played the first PBA game on April 9, 1975 at the Big Dome are expected to grace today's action.

The Llamados, the reigning Philippine Cup champions, got the start they wanted in their quest to sweep both titles this year with an 86-79 victory over Coca-Cola Sidekicks last night.

"The important thing for us is that we know we are not the champions in this tournament," coach Ryan Gregorio said after that win. "And that is what's motivating this team right now."

At stake, Junior Yap will be the main load for Derby Ace, which will continue to miss Eric Empeynado because of a leg injury.

Derby Ace, Ginebra stars head All-Star starting fives

DERBY ACE GUNSLINGER JUNIOR YAP IS having one of his finest seasons in the Philippine Basketball Association, and he then see showing their appreciation.

The 6-foot-2 native of Escalante, Negros Occidental, who won the MVP plum in 2000 and the Best Player of the Conference in the Philippine Cup last month, topped the balloting for starters in the annual PBA All-Star Game set April 25 in Puerto Princesa City.

With 47,286 votes, big-hearts nine other blue chip stars in the classic as off-guard mates for the South squad that will also have Ginebra's Cyrus Baguio and Bete Mesh, Kelly Williams of Sta. Lucia and Ogie Colas of Air21 Andrew Llamado.

Another Llamado, the hardworking forward Mars Pingris, was the top vote getter for the North.

He will be joined in the squad by Ginebra's K. Smith, Jay Jay Helterbrand and Gonzalo Paul Artadi.

Pingris garnered 23,482 votes, while Williams, the MVP two seasons ago, was the third-leading with about 23,000 votes.

Bobby Ray Parks was the top choice as center but he is likely to yield it to Ilo second-running shotstar on the Derby Ace that is nursing a leg injury that kept him out of the Llamados' first game in the Fiesta Conference.

The 10 PBA coaches will complete the lineup of both squads but they cannot vote for their players.

Marang R. Castillo

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COJUANGCO

No chair in equestrian, avers Peping

By Jane Nievera

PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE President Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. yesterday dismissed Carlina Cuisia-Bautista's reconciliatory efforts and maintained his claim to the leadership of the Equestrian Association of the Philippines.

Cojuangco said he will remain EAP head until he faces a re-election that complies with the association's constitution and by-laws.

He laughed off an offer from Cuisia-Bautista, who was elected recently as EAP president in a court-ordered election, for him to serve as the association's chair to end the leadership row in the sport.

"She's trying to offer a position, which is nonsensical," said Cojuangco during the POC Hour aired over Sports Radio 918. "There's no chairman in our association."

Cojuangco also lashed out at the way the election was conducted, saying the entire exercise was flawed.

Cuisia-Bautista, the former Bulsu party-list representative, took her oath of office along with the other newly-elected officials Monday.

But Cojuangco said that EAP officers, including the president, are selected by the board of trustees and not by regular members.

Cuisia-Bautista claimed that she was elected by 22 of the 27 members present. She added that four of the seven members of the EAP board declared the election legal.

Cojuangco, however, said that as corporate secretary, Cuisia-Bautista's job was to keep the records of the association and not to preside over a meeting.

"It's not her job," he said. "She calling to order of the meeting belongs to the president."

Cojuangco also said that the court cannot clip its hands into the dispute since it was tantamount to government intervention.

PBL eases rules on eligibility

By Jacinto N. Paz

THE PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL LEAGUE (PBL) will open its doors to more players as officials decided yesterday to raise the league age limit and allow teams to directly tap rogues from the provinces.

"Since most of our teams in the league right now are still young, they need someone who can guide their rookie players," said Bank Mariwasa, the league's officer in charge following the resignation of commissioner Chino Trinidad last month.

The PBL, fielding mostly school-based squads in recent years, has allowed teams to field a maximum of three players between 26 to 28 years old starting in the season's second conference late this month.

"These players will add on their games," said Mariwasa. "For us now, this is their second chance, so they sure they will come back again to play for any PBL team."

The league has also allowed squads to directly hire a maximum of five players below 26 years old from the Visayas and Mindanao.

But Mariwasa said to qualify, the provincial players must have played in any Metro Manila-based collegiate league.

Cangolf juniors sew it up

Carlos albatross caps Canlubang's Interclub romp

LOS BAÑOS—JOSHUA CARLOS STOLE THE LAST-round show with a tournament-best 37 points tallied by an albatross as Canlubang completed its domination of Division 1 in the Jaygolf Interclub golf championships at the Mt. Malarayat Golf and Country Club course here on Wednesday.

Carlos bailed his second shot on the par-5 No. 3 at the Makulot nine of the 27-hole complex en route to a three-under-par 68 to spark Canlubang's final-day explosion of 361 for a 26-point victory over Manila Southwoods.

Rupert Zaragosa and Gio Gandionco carded 72s to complete scoring for Canlubang.

Miguel Tabuena, who slumped to 72 and failed to count for Canlubang, held on to win the individual title by three points over Carlos.

Agonizable, behind Justin Ey, compiled a 147 to snatch the Division II crown while Carlos Philippe Paloma and Stevice Oliveros Jhe led Alabang to the Division III prize in this season-ender on the 2010 ICT-16 Jaygolf Summer Circuit.

The ICTSI Jaygolf Summer Circuit is also supported by Rexona Hexact Group, Hyundai Hyundai Hyundai, Isuzu Automotive, Sports Center, Philippine Airlines, McDonald's, Smart, Golf Depot and Pioneer Insurance.

By joined hands with Kristoffer Arevalo, Kristine Torralba and Bianca Bagtasgarcon to defeat a 11-point win for Agonizable while Paloma and Jhe teamed up with Miguel Oliveros Jhe and Gomez Gilly for a 16-point Alabang romp.

Among Tabuena as individual winners were Audie Jimenez Sports and Leisure Corp., Philippine Airlines, McDonald's, Smart, Golf Depot and Pioneer Insurance.

By joined hands with Kristoffer Arevalo, Kristine Torralba and Bianca Bagtasgarcon to defeat a 11-point win for Agonizable while Paloma and Jhe teamed up with Miguel Oliveros Jhe and Gomez Gilly for a 16-point Alabang romp.

Among Tabuena as individual winners were Audie Gruen of The Country Club Girls' Class A), Miggy Yee of Southwoods and Princess Espenol of Orchard (Class B), Dr. and Mrs. Legaspi of Southwoods (Class C), Arevalo and Sara Bruce of Sony (Class D), Josh Jorge of Sony and Bernice Oliveros Jhe (Class E) and Jed Dy of Jhe Filipinas and Arnie Espinosa of Sony (Class F).

Tabuena, Espenol and Dy are on for the early national co-players in individual play this season.

VICTORS Justin Carlos, Rupert Zaragosa, Gio Gandionco and Miguel Tabuena with Jaygolf president Luigi Tabuena (right), Canlubang team captain Tommy Marcelo (second from right) and Jaygolf director Bobby Dee (left).

Pagunsan settles for 68 in Myanmar

YANGON, MYANMAR—JUVIC PAGUNSAN celebrated his return to the Asian Tour by firing a 6-under-par 68 to lead Japanese sadsuat Yosuji Hirotsuka by four strokes in the start of the Air Bagan Myanmar Open on Thursday.

Khan Piyaq shot a 69 and Peerbhasal Asoke carded a 70 to the other top Filipino scorers in the 120-man field.

Pagunsan, who last played in the Asian Tour International last February, actually had it at seven-under but double-bogeyed the 18th.

Antonio Lascuña carded a 73, Marvin Dumandan and Michael Bibat posted 74s, Antonio Murakami had a 75 while Oscar Dangca and Jeremy Gobaton were pitted 76s each.

Shakey's girls volley under way

FAVORITES UNIVERSITY OF THE East and St. Francis of Assisi College-Recoletos headline a three-game bill kicking off the Shakey's Girls Volleyball League today.

UE, a former league champion, takes on St. Francis at 11 a.m. at the PEDI Flying V Arena in San Juan.

Diliman Preparatory School and University of the Philippines-Integrated School collide at 10 a.m. to open the tournament's seventh season, while Ursula Christian College battles Immaculate Heart of Mary College at 1 p.m.

Defending champion Hope Christian School opens its defense against Angeles University Foundation on April 22.

The competition pitting 14 varsity squads per season as an elimination leg of the nationwide meet which will culminate in the National Finals in October.

Other schools vying for the crown are perennial title contender University of Santo Tomas, Ingeborn College, Mapúa-La Salle National High School, St. Scholastica's College, Miriam College and University of Perpetual Help-Laguna.

Jacinto N. Paz

Where were you on April 9, 1975?

THE MEMORY OF THE FIRST PHILIPPINE Basketball Association game played on April 8, 1975 is understandably hazy to those at the Araneta Coliseum or in front of their TV sets on that day.

Pete is talking it's 35 years this March here.

Unless said of specific details like who played them and about Jay Alenlen's five baskets, how true that opening game can only argue back and forth as to what really happened.

Individual reporters or even social scientists can dig into microfilm files about that day when the Philippines launched their professional basketball league, and enlighten us. I solemnly doubt if a telescope of the game is still around.

* * *

When I recall hours watching those first games on TV was that the PBA was going to be the PBA's game model of choice.

Although deadened its commercial season, the PBA's return to the hoop wars to depart from the amateur game, aside from hulling out of the Basketball Association of the Philippines, was to play with its own rules governed after the NBA.

I clearly remember that the referees where a lot more vocal and animated, clearly trying to emulate, if not imitate, their NBA counterparts.

Technical fouls not merely signaled. There were coach-ejected fouls with enough to fill several shot clock indeed away. There was an occasional hustle and skirmish, resulting about a rule, but what basketball game is without an interpretation problem?

* * *

Both players and referees grappled with the new rules back then. And since that day, the rules of the game have changed many times over the years.

Going are calls like the backcourt foul, the three-in-trade-two foul, the "he hands me foul" stance, which was replaced by the flagrant foul, the no-dropping rule and guidelines on whether a defensive player is impeding the path of an offensive player.

Complaining about officiating hasn't changed in less decades but it doesn't mean that calling the game has deteriorated as well.

If there's game has been called as terribly as many seem to feel, then the league would not have lasted all these years.

* * *

What really is important is that the league took flight and went on a remarkable 35-season journey.

The PBA has fulfilled its primary role of providing basketball entertainment and done its share for the national cause by hosting Philippine teams since 1990.

The enthusiasm of ordinary folk who troop to the PBA venues or follow the games on TV on a consistent basis is still there.

Its watching the games on the stands or the teachers and you will understand that the league is their very own.

* * *

Or yet, the PBA has had its share of controversies like walkouts and player misbehavior, eligibility violations and officiating lapses. All these are part of the life of any organization and, perhaps, seen as in one or high profile as the PBA.

But while critics be ignored are the sins of omissions the league has provided over the years, the Crispa-Toyota rivalry, the emergence of the superstars of the '80s and the battles of the homegrown talents against those born overseas trick Filipino lineage, just to name just a few.

The games's one thing and the inherent talent and passion for the game has remained intact since 1975.

It's been a long way since Joe Dionisio first hurled 35 seconds ago. When were you on the fateful April day? Where you at Araneta or in front of your TV watching the birth of the league running down its course?

Globe recognizes valor of 2nd Infantry Division's 'jungle fighters'

Camp Aguinaldo Gapinpin, Tarlac, Rizal - As the nation celebrates the gallantry of our soldiers through our National Day of Valor (Araw ng Kagitingan), Globe is recognizing the Philippine Army's valiant efforts in maintaining the country's security, peace, and development by awarding education grants to its servicemen.

Three soldiers from the 2nd Infantry "Jungle Fighter" Division-Lieutenant Raymond Jon Sarong, Corporal Chris Anthony Delos, and CAPSGt Michel Auxiliary (CAA) Eddie Nonan- each received one-time educational grants worth P20,000 to support the education of their dependents. The awarding was held during the 2nd 2Ds 30th founding anniversary celebration.

During the awarding, GM Eddie Nonan was also given a special citation for being one of the Army's Best CAA. Lights both and attending just the first last. Nonan and Corporal Romeo Espanto (CAPSGt) units against a group of NPA rebels in Brgy. Bongabon, Brgy. San Juan, Bontoc, Chandler Mendoza, Sweeney Junior Bernal, they were able to repel the attack and defend their position.

"The regional education grants program by Industry Bayan services awardees is a nationwide project of Globe Bringing Communities, the corporate social responsibility (CSR) arm of Globe, in partnership with the Philippine Army. Three service awardees an officer, an enlisted personnel, and a Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU) personnel are hand-picked by the Philippine Army to receive the Globe education grants based on the following criteria: display courage and valor in the line of duty; diligence, initiative and carry out responsibilities promptly and effectively; and constantly demonstrate outstanding performance in the execution of his mandate. Since its launch in 2009, Globe BringinCom has awarded a total of 11 division-level service awardees.

The program is part of the CSR efforts of Globe geared towards building up sustainable development projects in the various communities it will serve.

Whoever is photo are the Globe education grant awardees/ CAA Eddie Nonan (L), Wilmer Jon Delos, and Cpl. Chris Anthony Delos (2nd, 4th, 5th from left) holding the education grants awarded to them by 2nd ID Commanding General Maj. Gen. Jorge Segovia (3rd from left). Globe Security Head for Luzon Jose Tan (far left), and Globe CSR Sr. Specialist Fernando Esguerra (far right).

Gacho tennis sisters sparkle

ZAMBOANGA CITY—SISTERS CHELSEA and Kyle Gacho dominated the second leg of the Smart/Head Junior Tennis Satellite Circuit 2010 recently at the Pettit Barracks of the Zamboanga Liners Tennis Court here.

Chelsea reigned supreme in the 14-under and 18-under girls' singles.

She is he sensational, Kyle grabbed the 18-under girls title.

Girls Sono followed up his conquest in the Cagayan de Oro leg by claiming the boys' 16-under crown while spoiling the double title hopes of Dharvis Juan Pinder Dumlao, 6-4, 6-0.

Lacuna topped the 18-under boys by defeating Jaraz Sumadia, 6-2, 6-4.

In the boys' 14-under play of this event pre-seeded Jerome Sumadia, 6-2, 6-4.

In the boys' 14-under play of this event pre-seeded Jerome Sumadia, 6-2, 6-4.

Chelsea Gacho (13 years), Ashley Cuenca (12-under boys), Harbour Mojarral (12-under girls), George Linares, Clyde Bulos

3 all-RP duels in knockout phase

Orcollo survives World 8-ball group stage but is paired anew with Corteza

IN ANOTHER SHOW OF MIGHT, THE Philippines sent five more players to the knockout stage to bring the total of Filipino qualifiers to 10 in the World 8-Ball Championship Wednesday in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates.

But the luck of the draw will leave the country's wild-card entrants to meet in the last 16 as six Filipinos found themselves on a collision course in the first knockout round.

Dennis Orcollo, Marlon Manalo, Jeff de Luna, Oliver Medenilla and Venancio Tondo prevailed to do-or-die matches to join early qualifiers Ronnie Alcano, Lee Van Corteza, Antonio Lining, Joven Alba and Raymond Faminas.

Orcollo, who qualified after a double-knockout setback, will take on the in-form Alba, who is seeded third in the knockout phase.

De Luna trounced Ricky Perek of Singapore, 6-3, to make the round of 32 opposite top seed Ricky Yang of Indonesia, even as Tondo nipped Iran's Mehdi Roshdi, 6-5, to earn the right to face 2nd Seeded of Jordan.

Alcano, who recorded a tournament-record 9-0 win over Iran's Mohammad Sotoudeh in the last round, will take on Corteza, who suffer lone loss, 6-5, in the group stage.

Manalo, who eliminated Lopez in the knockout stage with an 8-3 decision over Jordan's Sharjee Pakhrin, draws Iranian buddy Gohra, also in the round of 32.

In another all-Filipino faceoff, Medenilla, an 8-6 upset winner over Spain's Daniel Alcaide, will take on the winner between Faminas and Indonesia's Rizky Oktora.

Tondo, who survived a knockout match against Scott Higgins of Britain, will face Yapan Jakes on Chinese Taipei ace Ko Pin-Yi, who eliminated KPY Rio Aquino, 7-6.

Ruben Bandoja was the only other Filipino currently hoping to advance (skipped) of Mehmet, 8-6.

Cecilio P. Lopez

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Lopez gains medal round as 2 other RP bets tumble

WELTERWEIGHT WILFREDO LOPEZ ADvanced to the medal round but featherweight Charly Suarez and flyweight Rey Saludar bowed out in the China Open in Guiyang, Guizhou province, on Thursday.

Lopez outclassed Jordan's Mouin Dia Deib to assure the Filipino of a third bronze medal after Intramuros's Antonio Pedroza and Iligan flyweight Gerson Nieves.

Leading 3-0, Lopez landed powerful combinations that forced the referee to end the bout at 1:24 of the second round.

Suarez, gold medalist in the last Southeast Asian Games, dropped a 5-2 decision to European mixed veteran Dmitry Polyansky of Russia while Saludar bowed to 2008 Olympics light flyweight champion Zou Shiming of China, 10-3.

Lopez will seek a Rio berth when he battles Armenbyev Serapayge of Cuba Friday.

Pelicio, winner in three-round stoppage over Hong Kong's Cho Chung, goes to the quarterfinals. Jumbo Medrano Rakhatbayanov of Kazakhstan while Nieto meets another Kazakh in Islam Baitasov in the seventh. Rey Gaceta

All set for GDAP Summer Golf Show

THE LATEST FASHION AND EQUIPMENT TREND in golf will be showcased at the Philippine Golf Show to be held at the Glorietta 4 Activity Center in Makati City from April 15 to 18.

The show, which is organized by the Golf Digest Asia Pacific (GDAP), will feature products and services related to health and fitness, as well as other sports.

"For your golf partners, we have extended to give our patrons quality equipment and service which we are unveiling in the Summer Golf Show," Hidagawa said.

The GDAP will also hold the 15th Philippine International Golf Show on Sept. 24-26 at Hall 1 of the SMX Convention Center at the Mall of Asia in Pasay City.

Steve Silva, Gerdi Barte

GQ Champions derby fires off

IN ADDITION TO THE MAIN EVENT, THE 2010 Champions Derby will highlight the following races:

Race 1 (Maiden) – 1,000 meters, for 3-year-old fillies and colts

Race 2 (Maiden) – 1,000 meters, for 3-year-old fillies and colts

Race 3 (Handicap) – 1,000 meters, for 3-year-old fillies and colts

Race 4 (Handicap) – 1,000 meters, for 3-year-old fillies and colts

Race 5 (Handicap) – 1,000 meters, for 3-year-old fillies and colts

Race 6 (Handicap) – 1,000 meters, for 3-year-old fillies and colts

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Race 100 (Handicap) – 1,000 meters, for 3-year-old fillies and colts

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Distance: 3K, 5K & 10K Run
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TIGER Woods hits a shot while Mark O'Meara and caddie Shane Joel look on during a practice round prior to the 2010 Masters tournament. —AP

Woods gets scolding as Masters blasts off

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—ON THE DAY TIGER Woods arrived at the Masters, he changed out of his spikes after playing nine holes, walked across the parking lot and went upstairs to the office of Augusta National chair Billy Payne.

Payne would not discuss details of their Sunday afternoon meeting.

Nearly on his three criticism of Woods during his annual press conference Wednesday, they probably weren't talking about how Woods was hitting the ball or his chances of winning a fifth green jacket.

"It is simply not the degree of his conduct that it is egregious here," Payne said. "It is the fact that he disappointed all of us, and more importantly, our kids and our grandkids. Our kids did not live up to the expectations of the role model we saw for our children."

Payne was one of the Augusta National members who stood among the Georgia pines to the right of the first fairway on Monday, the first time Woods played before a gallery since being caught cheating on his wife five months ago.

His other golf official has been so outspoken about Woods' behavior. No other major is like the Masters.

Even though Woods is a four-time champion and the No. 1 player in the world, he is at Augusta National by invitation, just like the other 93 players who will tee it up Thursday.

Woods had already played his final practice round—nine holes with Mark O'Meara—and left the course when Payne held his news conference.

No one knows what to expect from his game because Woods has not competed since winning the Australian Masters on Nov. 15.

Woods attended the Golf Writers Association of America dinner Wednesday to receive his 10th player of the year award.

Payne wasn't concerned that the return of Woods might overshadow an event setting the largest golf audiences of the year. —AP

Oddsmakers install Tiger 6-1 favorite

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—TIGER WOODS will enter the spotlight when he tees off in Thursday's opening round of the 123 Masters for his first outing for nearly five months but he has been made the tournament favorite.

The world number one, who took a break from golf when his private life spectacularly unraveled at the end of last year amid allegations of extra-marital affairs, has been installed as 6-1 favorite by British bookmakers Ladbrokes.

Fellow American Phil Mickelson is rated at 14-1 with South African Ernie Els third best at 16-1.

"Tiger going off as a 6-1 chance prior to his problems would have been unheard of but we're prepared to take a chance following his self-imposed exile," Ladbrokes spokesman Nick Weinberg said in a statement on Wednesday.

Ladbrokes also offered special odds for other Woods-related incidents.

The 14-times major winner, a four-times champion at Augusta National, is 100-1 to record his ten-and-5-1 to finish his opening round above the par.

Woods is 5-4 to register at least five birdies in his first round.

Oosthuizen tops Par-3

Meanwhile, Louis Oosthuizen of South Africa won the Par-Three contest on Wednesday.

Oosthuizen, 27, became the third successive South African to take the event following Tim Clark and Rory Sabbatini.

Oosthuizen, who won the 2008 Andalucia Open last month for his 63rd European Tour title, birdied the last for six under par 21 on the short hole course at the east edge of Augusta National. Reuters

Warriors give Nelson record in career wins

DON Nelson

MINNEAPOLIS—Don Nelson set the NBA career record for victories by a coach as the Golden State Warriors' 118-107 win over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Wednesday.

Nelson won his 1,335th career game, surpassing Lenny Wilkens to move atop the list.

Stephen Curry had 27 points, 14 assists, eight rebounds and a career-high seven steals, and Anthony Tolliver scored a career-high 24 for the Warriors, who snapped their 10-game road losing streak to the Timberwolves, who were making head coach in the game since it's debut.

Kevin Love had 17 points and 16 rebounds for the Timberwolves, who were making head coach in the game since it's debut. At halftime Nelson became of personal memories.

NBA on ETC

Box — Cleveland at Chicago 10:00 pm — LA Clippers at Sacramento (Delonte) Dirk Nowitzki Dallas at Utah Jazz Shelby Gallo and/or Shane Battier Memphis at Houston

At New Orleans, Charlotte clinched the first playoff in its six-year history after Stephen Jackson scored 29 points and D.J. Augustin hit a three-pointer with 16 seconds left in a 104-102 win over New Orleans. AP

Complete results:
Cleveland 113, Philadelphia 103; Boston 93, Atlanta 91; Detroit 92, Indiana 89; Miami 95, Philadelphia 89; Minnesota 108, New Jersey 101; Golden State 118, Minnesota 107; Chicago 103, New Orleans 102; Denver 102, Oklahoma City 94; Orlando 117, Washington 94; Dallas 110, Memphis 91; Houston 113, Utah 98; Portland 113, LA Clippers 82; Phoenix 132, San Antonio 101

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■ ABS-CBN 2009 profit up 23% /B2

Editor Raul D. Pangalangan • Assistant Editor Connie S. Nemenzo

BUSINESS

IN THIS ISSUE
■ Four bidders vie for Bac-Man /B3

RP to auction off rights to import sugar anew

Private firms may ship in 45,100 tons to plug expected shortfall

THE GOVERNMENT ON APRIL 20 PLANS TO AUCTION off to private firms tariff-free rights to import 45,100 tons of sugar in an effort to plug an expected crop shortfall.

The volume represented the remainder of the 60,000 tons that were scarcely during a previous auction on Feb. 23. At that time, the government succeeded in selling off rights for 14,900 tons, an official said yesterday said.

The Philippines needs to import sugar to meet an increase in demand and cover an expected drop in output as dry weather constrains cane-bailer crops.

"We have the go-signal to proceed with the rebidding, and the tentative schedule for the opening of bids is on April 20," said Rosario Cisneros, head of the planning department at the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) and vice chair of the joint SRA-NFA (National Food Authority) bidding and allocation committee.

The decision to hold a second tender came after US sugar prices fell by half since hitting a 29-year high of 38.43 cents a pound on Feb. 1.

"We also need to build a buffer stock of between 300,000 and 360,000 tons by the end of the crop year in August," she added.

Apart from the rights being auctioned off, the government has also allocated import rights to private firms for 95,000 tons.

The 14,000 tons that were allocated in February are scheduled to arrive on June 15. The government expects the shipment of the balance of 150,000 tons allocated to private firms by July 31.

Raw sugar output for the crop year ending in August would likely be lower than the projected 2.39 million tons due to the El Niño weather disturbance, Rafael Coscolluela, then head of the state sugar regulator, said in January.

Coscolluela, who is now Agriculture undersecretary, said the country's sugar production could fall to 2.2 million tons.

Sugar output for the 2008-2009 crop year was 2.4 million tons.

The Philippines is a net importer of sugar, buying from countries that have preferential trade agreements with the country.

Under the World Trade Organization, the country is allowed to import 156,000 tons of sugar duty-free.

Cisneros said the government would not allow the importation of sugar from countries that have not yet ratified the Philippines' membership in the WTO.

"We will not allow countries that have not ratified the WTO to export sugar to the Philippines," she said.

Gov't offers RTBs to tap workers' offshore savings

By Roneel W. Dumaiga

THE GOVERNMENT WILL SOON offer "trade-currency" retail treasury bonds (RTB) to overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), hoping to tap their savings mainly denominated in euros and US dollars.

The government plans to launch the RTBs, or "OFW bonds," on April 20. The bonds to be issued will have three-year and five-year terms.

The bonds will also be offered to other Filipinos who have dollar and euro bank accounts, as well as institutional buyers.

According to Jose Mangay First Metro Investment Corp., the minimum purchase is $500 or 500 euros.

Overseas contract workers and migrants who still carry Philippine passports or are dual citizens may be able to buy up $1,000,000 worth of RTBs—the maximum amount for a retail issue.

The issue manager also said that overseas Filipinos could buy "at least 20 percent" of the amount issued, or a minimum of $200 million.

Workers whose contracts have expired within a year of the date of issue are still eligible to buy bonds.

MORE ON PAGE B2

ABS-CBN '09 profit up 23%

By Paolo G. Montecillo

Firm sees better performance this year

REPORTS GIANT ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. expects to profit from the rebound in the country's economy this year on the back of heavy campaign-related spending and the anticipated growth in regular advertising revenues.

In a briefing on Thursday, the Lopez-led television network said its net income in 2009 grew 23 percent to P1.7 billion, higher than the P1.38-billion profit the year before.

The company said its core net income also grew 37 percent to P1.79 billion, up from P1.31 billion in 2008.

"We had a great year last year, and I think 2010 is going to be another banner year for us," ABS-CBN chief financial officer Rolando Nakpil Inumerable said.

The company said its revenue, which improved 11 percent to P24.05 billion in 2009, benefited heavily from the growth in consumer sales revenue or the earning contributions of the subsidiaries.

The most significant contribution came from ABS-CBN Global, the distributor of the network's international brand, The Filipino Channel (TFC). Total consumer sales revenue reached P13.39 billion, with about half coming from TFC sales.

ABS-CBN said despite last year's financial crisis weighing on the finances of overseas Filipino workers, TFC subscriptions still grew 13 percent to 2.16 million in 2009 over the previous year.

Its cable TV subsidiary SkyCable posted a 34-percent increase in its revenue contributions to P3.08 billion from year ago level.

The network's consumer sales revenue, which also includes contributions from ABS-CBN's publishing business, made up 42 percent of total revenue.

On the incentive, airtime revenue grew by 7 percent to P10.23 billion in 2009 from P9.6-42 billion a year earlier. Nakpil said despite decline in advertising during the start of last year, "advocacy" advertisements by politicians helped save the year for the company.

Minimum corporate tax

Rizal / Publishing

IT'S INCOME TAX SEASON AGAIN.

This is the time of the year when accountants are busiest preparing for us some system geek's "cooking" the books of account of their clients to meet their tax obligations.

In designing the "least-painful" how to carefully read the thin line that separates tax avoidance from tax evasion.

If there are gray areas in the law that can be invoked to reduce or avoid the payment of taxes, the taxpayer concerned cannot be faulted for taking advantage of them.

For thinking some "savings" possible, the tax adviser who spotted the loophole can expect to be rewarded handsomely for his discovery.

And when word spreads to the industry about it, similarly situated taxpayers follow suit until the regulators get wise to the scheme and adopt the appropriate measures to stem the revenue loss.

Tax evasion, however, is a different story. The refusal to pay taxes that are due and payable can give rise to criminal and civil liabilities to the taxpayer and whoever may have advised him to willfully engage in his tax duties.

Low taxes

Until our lawmakers took notice, it was common practice by unscrupulous businessmen to form corporations that existed in huge pacific during the year but reported losses at the end of their fiscal year.

Following the principle that income tax is imposable only on earned income, these companies were not, strictly speaking, obliged to pay taxes.

Behind the scenes, however, the bulk of their earnings went to the pockets of their stockholders and officers (who are also stockholders) by way of dividends, salaries, allowances and other perks and privileges.

With sleight-of-hand accounting techniques, the supposedly employment-based expenses were added to bloated operating costs that resulted, at least in the corporate books, in low income or losses.

The net effect of this slick scheme was less or zero taxes.

Either way it went, these companies availed of the services and facilities that the government made available to all companies regardless of their financial condition.

Thus, supposedly unprofitable companies enjoyed the benefits of public services and facilities without contributing any centavo to the national coffers. It was outpassant guesthouse exploitation at their worst.

Taxable year

To root up the bulwark and to discourage avoidance of taxes by reported reporting of losses, Republic Act No. 8424 imposed the 1998 minimum corporate income tax (MCIT) on domestic corporations.

Basically the law gives new corporations some breathing space by allowing them to invoke business losses to exempt the payment of the standard corporate income tax.

However, on the fourth taxable year immediately following the year in which these corporations started operating, they are required to pay the MCIT which is equivalent to two percent of their gross income as of the end of the taxable year.

The specifics on how the tax shall be computed and paid are spelled out in the regulations that the Bureau of Internal Revenue have issued to implement the law.

The bottom line of the law is, all corporations, regardless of their state of profitability, have to pay income tax using a formula that takes into account their actual income stream during the taxable year.

Understandably, the affected parties complained about the inconvenience tax regulations. A convenient excuse for avoiding (if not evading) taxes—business losses—was removed from the textbook.

Valid exercise

Last month, the Supreme Court ordered the issue on the constitutionality of the MCIT.

Rather, the association of real estate brokers claimed that the tax imposition is "highly oppressive, arbitrary and confiscatory."

In its ruling, the tribunal pointedly stated that some companies deliberately manipulate their books to report losses or minimal taxable income by "under declarations in income earned or over deduction in expenses."

With that premise, the justices said the MCIT is aimed at deterring tax evasion and reducing the incidence of tax avoidance schemes that are "substantial through administrative and artful manipulations of deductions and other stratagems."

Since the MCIT is based on the companies' gross income (or total earnings before deducting allowable expenses), the tribunal did not see anything wrong with requiring them to contribute a reasonable portion of their money to the national coffers.

The decision couldn't have come at a more opportune time considering that the SEC is presently engaged in aggressive efforts to meet its revenue target for the year.

It has been said (and with sufficient reason) that government regulators of business activities is a catch-up game.

The regulated parties devise ways and means to go around the rules and the agencies' duty to make a lot of money for them, the regulators try to anticipate these moves to enable them to take the appropriate remedial measures.

Thankfully, in the tax collection game, the government has in its corner the presumption that "taxes constitute the lifeblood of the State" and therefore all doubts about its powers must are resolved in favor.

(For feedback, please write to Ipat at ipat.luna@gmail.com.ph)

Shares drop

From page B1

failed to offset the decline in the industrial, holding firms, property and services sectors. Dealers said many investors locked in gains ahead of another long weekend.

The local stock market today will go on a break to mark the Araw ng Kagitingan holiday.

Yesterday's turnover was heavy at P5.33 billion.

There were 37 advancers against 16 decliners, while 79 stocks were unchanged.

Overnight, US stocks maintained its positive trend on news of retail customer borrowing and loans received by General Motors during second semester of 2009. Ivonne Davis C. Jhembec

RP

From page B1

sugar agency said last month.

The country consumed 2 million tons of sugar a year, and exports up to 127,000 tons to the United States under an annual quota.

This year the US allocated an additional 15,700 tons to the Philippines, giving the third biggest increase after the Dominican Republic and Brazil, as Washington shifted the volumes from countries that might not be able to fill their quota. Reuters, Rita T. Dela Rosa/dmc

SOUTHERN LEYTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Nasaag, Maasin City, Southern Leyte
Tel. No. (053) 381-2144, (053) 381-2786, Telefax (053) 570-9820

INVITATION FOR BIDS

SOUTHERN LEYTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (SOLECO) invites interested parties for the SUPPLY, DELIVERY, INSTALLATION & COMMISSIONING of a BRAND NEW, 69KV, SF6, CIRCUIT BREAKER, 69KV PRIMARY METERING EQUIPMENT & AVR to be installed at Hinoog-angan Substation and SUPPLY & DELIVERY of other LINE EQUIPMENTS such as CAPACITORS & LINE RECLOSERS.

Interested bidders must apply for accreditation on or before April 21, 2010.

Eligible bidders may obtain further information and secure bidding documents from SOLECO main office at Sors-Sors, Maasin City, Southern Leyte upon payment of a non-refundable bidder's fee of TEN THOUSAND PESOS ONLY (P10,000.00). Pre-bid conference is set on April 28, 2010, 10:00 a.m. at the SOLECO Main Office. Only accredited bidders are eligible to attend. Failure to attend the pre-bid conference automatically disqualifies a participant from entering the final bidding.

Sealed proposals in two copies accompanied by a Security Bond of Five Percent (5%) of the bid price will be received by SOLECO at Sors-Sors, Maasin City, Southern Leyte on or before 10:00 a.m. on May 18, 2010 at which time and place the bids will be opened in the presence of bidders or their duly authorized representatives.

SOLECO reserves the right to reject any or all bids whenever the interest of the Cooperative so demands.

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

Four bidders vie for BacMan

By Abigail L. Ho

THE 150-MEGAWATT (MW) BACON-Manito geothermal facility in Bacon, Sorsogon and Manito, Albay has attracted four bidders.

According to the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp., the government agency in charge of privatizing the power plants of National Power Corp., those four bidders attended Tuesday's pre-bid conference to clarify certain provisions of the bidding procedures.

Comments raised during the pre-bidconference, however, would not change the bidding procedures for the geothermal facilities, unless PSALM issues a supplemental bid bulletin citing any change, PSALM asset reduction and disposal department manager Ricardo Simplez said in a statement.

All four bidders that participated in the pre-bid conference had complied with PSALM's initial requirements, including the submission of a letter of interest as well as payment of a non-refundable fee of $12,000.

They likewise executed a confidentiality agreement with PSALM before the March 29 deadline.

Because of this confidentiality agreement, PSALM could not disclose the names of the four bidders, although Aboitiz Power Corp. and the Lopez group's Energy Development Corp. were said to be among those interested in the geothermal plants.

Deadline for the submission of final bids is scheduled for May 5.

The Bac-Man 1 geothermal plant is composed of two 55-MW turbines, both commissioned in 1993.

The Bac-Man 2 plant, on the other hand, is composed of the Cawayan and Botong units, each rated at 20 MW.

The Cawayan unit started commercial operation in 1994, while the Botong unit was commissioned in 1998.

The geothermal steam that fuels the plants' turbines comes from EDC, the largest geothermal energy producer in the country.

Benguet gets funding for mining projects

By Rica T. Ostonales

BENGUET CORP. HAS APproved a private placement agreement that would raise P320.9 million for its priority projects including the Bulalacao tailings and Acupan resources mining projects.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Benguet Corp. said that the private placement transaction calls for the purchase of 14.56 million Class "N" common shares at P33 a share and 5.7 million Class "F" nominal shares at P36 a share, using the average price of the last three trading days at the local bourse.

Benguet Corp. also said that the company's articles of incorporation do not provide for preemptive rights.

In October last year, Benguet Corp. said it planned to raise as much as P900 million for the Balatoc tailings project. The company appointed SSS Securities Capital Partners Inc. as its financial adviser.

Aviation corporate secretary Reynaldo F. Mendoza said at the time that the planned project would resolve the repocessing of mine tailings to recover gold.

The project may also be integrated with other processing activities such as roasting of concentrate parts to result in higher gold recovery and reduce the silica yield-effect on it, an office memorandum by product.

Gov't offers RTBs

From page B1

Parents, spouses and children, as well as so-called "allowees," are also eligible to buy.

"Allowees" refer to people who are not members of an OFW's—particularly a married woman—immediate family but are responsible for the latter's finances.

The dependents must present the necessary documents to prove their status.

PMIC officials said the company would coordinate with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration to confirm the status of "pure OFWs."

The government will shoulder the withholding tax on the yield for these buyers, but other buyers would need to pay the 20-percent levy.

Auction for the new RTBs will be held on April 10 and will be an offer worth P5B.

Monetary authorities have given the go-ahead for a multi-currency RTB loan of up to $1 billion, but Treasury officials said the amount of issuance would depend on demand.

Earlier this month, Treasurer Eduardo S. Mendiola said that the new RTB, which offered enhanced returns, was meant to encourage OFWs to save while allowing the government to raise funds to cover its expenses.

Mendiola described the offering as "developmental" and a campaign for financial literacy.

PRULINK

Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	PRU LIFE UK
	Mar. 1, 2013	Mar. 28, 2013
Bond Fund - Peso	1.00000	1.00000
Managed Fund - Peso	2.10891	2.09218
Growth Fund - Peso	1.95111	1.95000
Equity Fund - Peso	0.50857	0.50000
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.01364	1.01364
Managed Fund - Euro	1.11811	1.11818
Managed Fund - Fund 2	1.14717	1.14717
Profession Fund - Peso	1.00000	1.00000
Money Market Fund - Peso	1.00000	1.00000

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Your *sari-sari* store and grocery rolled into one

By Carole Salamero-Montano

WITH ITS MALLS, SUPERMARKETS and hypermarkets already in place and their future expansion plans cast on, the SM brand retail group of the Sy family is now focusing its attention and resources on its newest 'baby'—the Savemore Market, designed to be everyone's neighborhood grocery and wet market rolled into one.

Savemore, however, is not the term an SM executive put up in Bonifacio, Malkina back in 1999. Although Savemore Markets has been doing well since it opened, it took four years before the second store was built and, another six years or so before it got the house it needed.

Ana Rodolfo "Dolly" A. Tagbo, senior assistant vice president of Savemore Market, admits that superior of the SM food retail group had to take the back seat in the past years as the group had been too preoccupied with the unstoppable expansion of the SM malls, as well as the supermarkets and the hypermarkets in them.

Time has come

But now that its time has come, there's no stopping Savemore from expanding aggressively. It surely is making its presence felt one and in a big way. For instance, one can possibly miss other stores newly opened Savemore stores along Edsa—in Pasay, in the Kamias area beside Mowery Drug and near Ninja Q Mart and one in SM Aurora. There are also three Savemore stores along Sucat-Dasmariñas.

An expansion rooted in 2007

When five branches were put up, followed by another five in 2008. The mushrooming of Savemore stores, particularly in metro Manila and other key cities in the country, has become more noticeable late year when 13 new branches opened. There are now 28 Savemore stores, full of which are in the National Capital Region.

Competition

Savemore competes the SM group's food retail lineup—the others that come ahead were the hypermarkets, supermarkets and Makro, the membership-only outlet.

It is more of a neighborhood convenience store and wet market than aims to bring the SM shopping experience closer to where people live and work.

Its presence in the neighborhood spares the customers from the trouble of traveling to the supermarkets, thus saving them time, effort and transport cost.

Savemore, according to Tagbo, also aims to capture the short-haul customers who are already patronizing wet market customers by providing fresh meats, poultry products, fish, fruits and vegetables in a clean and air-conditioned environment and at competitive prices. This is why at least 30 percent of the space of every Savemore store is allotted to fresh products. Most stores open at 9 a.m., although some open early, and close at 6 p.m.

While the supermarkets and hypermarkets are more of a destination, especially on weekends, Savemore is perfect for the shoppers' last-minute purchases and their day-to-day budget.

While purchases in the first two answer to thousands of pesos, the average basket size of Savemore shoppers is only P300, he says.

"Because it is just around the corner, one can go to and shop in Savemore every day. It can be one's bodega (store room) as we have seen from our surveys and sign-fresh goods at home," he adds.

With its compact size—500 square meters on vast more than 3,000 sq. m.—one can do his shopping in a shorter period. But despite its size, the SM group's "baby" offers a full line of grocery products and a wide range of fresh products.

Dolly: Its hope people is to have go-ready-to-cook meals and ready-to-eat items such as salads and fresh juices which, Tagbo says, were prepared with attention

CUSTOMERS Savemore performs a dance number during the opening of Savemore in Tagaytay.

One-stop-shop

Just like the hypermarkets/supermarkets, however, Savemore is also a one-stop-shop thus offers money exchange and bills payment services.

> The goal is to put up at least one Savemore store in every city or town in the country.

Savemore stores may pose a threat to small groceries, sari-sari stores and wet markets in the neighborhood but competition, according to Tagbo, brings out the best in everyone and benefits the consumers most. For one, competition encourages all these retail outlets to improve on the quality of their offerings, services and prices.

Its presence, according to Tagbo, also helps create economic activities and improve the quality of life in its host communities, have more grassroots employment, as each store hires about 250 direct and indirect workers. He also notes the improvement in the road network and other infrastructure facilities, as well as in the public's access to transportation, to areas where Savemore is present.

"Even before we set up our stores, we talk to local government officials in the host communities on matters about roads and other concerns. In some cases, Savemore and its tenants pool funds to help put up some public structures," he adds.

In the last few years, Savemore Market's expansion was boosted by the acquisition or leasing of properties with existing structures, including some branches of the good-old Gind's supermarket, enabling the SM food retail group to open new stores faster and at lesser cost.

"Its expansion will be more aggressive than the supermarkets and hypermarkets because it costs less, requires smaller pieces of land and the stores are faster to build," Tagbo says.

Expansion

The goal is to put up at least one Savemore store in every city or town in the country. For this year, there will be 20 new stores and by 2013, the target is to have a total of 250 stores.

The focus of the current expansion, Tagbo says, is in northern Luzon, although Savemores is also opening in other parts of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao.

Last year, it opened in Solano, Nueva Vizcaya. This year, it will open in Baguio, Isabela and it hopes to put up stores soon in Tagaytay, Cabanatuan and Santiago.

"This strategy is mainly aimed at attaining efficiency in the delivery of products that businesses carries" he says.

In choosing the host areas for Savemores, according to Tagbo, the SM food retail group makes its own study of the demographic setup, the population and average household income. Quezon City, for instance, is a priority area given its population of over a million and the average household income of P15,000 a month.

"We also consider the traffic generated such as churches, universities and wet markets," he says.

Complementary

Despite the presence of SM supermarkets in many areas in the country, Tagbo says, there will always be a need for Savemore stores. There is no competition between these two segments. They even complement each other.

"There will always be a need for us to serve our customers better, and that is through going closer to them," Tagbo says.

SAVEMORE market SAVP for operations Jojo Tagbo (right), with SM Supermarket president Herbert Sy, gets ready to welcome the customers.

Which political ad lines strike you the most?

By Roger Pe
Contributor

IT'S HOT THE CENTERPIECE HOT. The damage brought by the G Nite smoking crew sets men on a huge rant. The temperature is over hotter in the political arena as election fever is said to national levels down near.

As the country awaits to first automated elections in May, thousands of men are up for grabs, candidates from the rumorous vessels to highly urbanized cities are vying their best to get everyone's attention.

As such, it's sweet smelling time. The earthier the better, the most provocative gets noticed, the most decent wears on the hearts of people. There are clever lines and boring ones. There are some that are easy to remember and there are those that you can't recall because either they're ordinary or 'absentedly' long. And there are bland ones that leave you's whimper.

Words, indeed, are powerful. The way that they're framed and encoded with correct components gets big innerwork members—they only could mean precious votes.

But like in consumer advertising, are they truth well told or contradicted to create a media bellow?

Kids are singing Manny Villar's anthem-campaign, "Sabihin ko sa iyo ang bagay na hanap" with gusto and, alas, surprisingly, remembering the lyrics. Bagong Aquino is becoming minute acronicks with his anti-corruption platform —"Hindi Ako Magnanakaw."

Bong is single-minded and demographic: "Kung Pasig sa Makinig." Dick Gordon and Raquel Bonnevie have now in position themselves as "The Trustworthiness." Gibo Teodoro banks on his patriotism and inherent "Tatling ni Tito."

Eddie Villanueva is doing an Obama with a "Pagbabago" advocacy and double-concedes him "Eddie Ako." Jamby Madrigal seems to be crowding Loren on environment platform. Mar Roxas seems to be known as "Mr. Palengke." Lumen Leganda, aside from being a green advocate, employs a buffet of slogans that confuses some people—they say they aren't remember which one is her official line.

We found people talking iconclusively and echoing "Gusto ko happy ka!" "Erodin's ad handlers must have done some audience-neighboring. When you leverage on an emotional benefit and it gets repeated often, it's good indication," says a top ad agency/corporate communications director.

"Determinasyon, Dedikasyon," Dr. Wowie is catchy.

"Tatak Hindi Antiko by Samson Mitra is hard-hitting as it is direct.

It is on fours with Pia Cayetano who uses her name as product—the basic: "Pia, Pia, Pia."

Michael Defensor-Santiago's accent and no-nonsense credentials seem to have become her trademark and passport to re-election.

Mike Arroyo's cinematographer to his black and white TV commercial done his job well.

Heyyers, word pause.

Words have a way of sticking to people's minds if crossed in a manner as to linger ink. As they say, when to doubt, make it rhyme.

"DAISY"—the most controversial political TV advertising campaign ever made in the US

Hit Presidential candidate Pena Dirsaid "Time For Bono" in 1992. Dwight Eisenhower bamboozled in 1952 with "I like Ike." James Polk used "Reannexation of Texas and Reoccupation of Oregon" in 1844 to swing votes for him.

Makati City mayor Jejomar Binay who is running for Vice President has "Kay Binay, Gagaanda ang Bukas." Again, Joseph Estrada is using "Erap para sa Mahirap." Nepotsy also uses this line in his outdoor campaign: "Pag hindi ewraps, sealing mahirap." Gazzingan's battlecry is "Let's go sa, Gazzingan."

Presidential catchphrases

Some campaign lines nevertheless are only for charm-or truth but also for across the planet. Here are a few:

"Follow me, I won't let you down."—Carlos Saul Menem, Argentinian presidential candidate.

"For the first time, we have a nation for a candidate and a candidate for a nation."—Edmund Burton, Australia's first prime minister.

"I've seen the future. It is scary and Belgian."—Stephen Hellard.

"Let us be English or let us be French ... and above all, let us be Canadians."—John MacDonald.

"I've prepared 100 coffins. 99 for corrupt officials and one for myself."—Ferdinand Edralin Marcos.

"I am here to work, and to work and to work."—President Alvaro Uribe Velez, Colombia.

"Working has been corrupt under the reg..."—Brad Sejkhaw, Thailand prime minister.

"Frogs are not asked for opinion when you want to drain a marshland."—Hungarian James Kosa.

"India thinking."—The IMF Party.

"A politician who is poor is a poor politician."—Carlos Hank Gonzalez, the former Mexico City mayor who was conscientiously banned for running as Mexican's president.

"At your service."—Dutch Dim Forsaya.

"Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."—John F. Kennedy during his inaugural speech.

Heroes, intrigue, shenanigans, romance, drama and blatant assault to personal lives are ingredients of political advertising. Heroism as well as negative political advertising abounds wherever you go. Add to that, rip-offs of TV commercials from award-winning Cibs and Grenee campaigns and made to appear like original creation by handlers of political candidates.

Attack on one's person can't be missed as in the case of Grover Cleveland versus James Blaine in the US in 1884: "Blaine, Blaine, James G. Blaine. The continental liar from the state of Maine." And "Ma, Ma, Where's my Pa? Gone to the White House, Ha, ha, ha."

The first one referred to Blaine's alleged questionable business ethics and the second referred to Cleveland's alleged sleeping arrangement with his political candidacy now with as contraries ago.

For the curious, Homer Page Emily the world's first global student newspaper, lists seven of the notedest political ads in recent times. Among them is a face of Indy's Barbara cast panelled in the first and branded as "corrupt, immoral philanderer who is helping defame Indy's public image and ignore the country's worst problems."

Other famous:

Wikipedia lists "Daisy Girl" as the most controversial and its creator, Tony Schwartz of Doyle, Dane and Bernbach was either credited or blamed for creating the first political attack TV advertising. Though aired only once during Lyndon B. Johnson's presidential bid against Barry Goldwater in 1964, it was a big factor in the former's landslide victory. The spot portrayed Goldwater as a dangerous warmonger.

The ad begins with a little girl in the fields counting the petals of a daisy flower. Her sequence count transforms and says the others in the setting codes. When she reaches "nine," a voice is heard, counting down a missile launch. As the countdown reaches "zero," the screen fades to black and a mushroom cloud appears from a nuclear explosion.

Johnson's voice then narrates: "Let's make a world where all God's children can live. Let's love each other or we must die." A voiceover then followed it up with: "Vote for President Johnson. On November 3. The stakes are too high for you to stay home."

People, Events & Products

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Lina Arles Espinosa

Ama Bank increases capital to P1 billion, expands services

AMA BANK, THE LARGEST USER-owned Loan Bank in the Philippines, recently obtained the Certificate of Approval to increase its authorized capital stock from P900 million to P1 billion from the Securities and Exchange Commission and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

A consistent awardee in Asia and Blue Ocean Strategy and other consumer loan products, AMA Bank, as of February 28 has total resources amounting to P2.7 billion from P2.600 billion in the year 2000 with a modest 3.3 percent non-performing loan (NPL) ratio, which is notably way below the industry non-performing loans (NPL) ratio known to 6 to 6 percent.

Moreover, it is worthwhile to note about AMA Bank's gross revenues increased from P59.9 million in the first 3 months of 2009 to P67.896 million likewise for the first 2 months period of 2010, thereby posting a net income from P3.579 million in 2009 to P17.867 million for the first two months of 2010 or 537 percent growth brought about by reduced interest expenses and loan revenue growth. The total net income is projected to grow in P100 million by the year 2014 from P36 million in 2009, according to Alejandro C. Soliman, EVP and COO.

With the affirmative showing in revenue, its capital to risk assets ratio (CAR) is now at its highest level at 13.1 percent over and above the minimum requirement of 10 percent imposed by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. To date, paid-in capital of AMA Bank is P600 million.

Significantly, the increase to capital underlines its commitment to provide better deposit and loan facilities to meet the rising demands of its customers, under a difference in their lives and enable them to make meaningful progress.

Through the years, AMA Bank, a member of AMA Group of Companies founded and chaired by its founder Amabile B. Aguirre V has inspired consumers confidence by posting positive growth consistent with its capital build up program, thus playing a greater role in the banking industry with sound professional services.

With its present banking network of ten branches strategically located in NCR, Southern Tagalog, Central Luzon and Northern Luzon regions, AMA Bank considers other competitive locations near its short term Regular Time Deposit, Special Time Deposit for 9 years, and for 5 years-1 day at 6 percent per annum per annum, inclusive.

To fully complement its deposit products and enhance its reference, AMA Bank is in the process of providing AMA services to its clients and provides wider latitude of loan service, in addition to its niche products of auto and loan loans, such as Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Loans covered by real estate as collateral, Micro-Finance, Step-Ed-assisted Teacher's Loan and Corporate Salary Loan as employees via salary deduction scheme.

ASIAN HOSPITAL HOSTS 1ST POSTGRADUATE COURSE ON OB-GYNE

Medical courses affecting women's health are the highlights of the recent 1st Post-graduate Course on Ob-Gyne held at Asian Hospital and Medical Center. With the theme 'Back to the Basics ... in Women's Healthcare', Asian Hospital and Medical Center enlightened more than a hundred medical students, Ob-Gynecologists and Gynecology Dr. Ma. Lina Serapion, Dr. Renato de Guzman, Dr. Francis Arnold Gabaud, Dr. Ma. Lourdes Cruz-Ong, Dr. Ma. Victoria Reyes-Quinto

'Electrolux Man' knocks on bigger doors

By Abigail L. Ho

"The power drook on your door.

Ring on your bell,

Spray on your window, too.

Why don't you open your door

To Lots-chan you more?

I'm your friendly Electrolux Man!"

THAT ILL-TED-INSPIRED TV commercial jingle probably still rings in many '70s and '80s families' heads more than three decades later—long after Electrolux has graduated four selling vacuum cleaners via door-to-door salespeople.

Since the Swedish appliance brand came to Philippine shores in the '70s (or, yes, the Electrolux door-to-door salespeople, in question) the country has grown by leaps and bounds and new targets primarily the premium market.

Mats Israelz, general manager of Electrolux Philippines Inc., admits that when Electrolux first put up an office here in 2003, the brand has grown bit-by-bit over the years.

"We've managed to improve how consumers perceive Electrolux. We're now in retail stores, and we have our own showrooms. We offer premium, innovative products. Those who know us here are the ones who are patronizing us today, because they know the quality of our appliances," she says.

THE APPLIANCE market is a very competitive market. Even if consumers change their appliances only once every three to five years, the market is still very competitive. We really have to protect our dominance in the markets where we are playing," she says, adding that this can be done by constantly introducing innovative products.

"Last year, we posted single-digit growth even when the industry has gone down significantly declined. It was probably the biggest decline that the industry has ever experienced. And we have an aggressive target for 2010. We want to be a dominant number player in all categories. Air-conditioners and refrigerators will play a major role in the achievement of our goals. We're targeting double-digit growth for the year," she adds.

This year will see Electrolux launching more advertising and promotions campaigns for all its product lines, she says, as well as conducting activities that are very specific to certain product categories.

"The key is to remain consistent. We'll make sure that consumers don't forget us," she says. "We have to keep innovating, to give consumers something new every two to three years."

Other markets

Apart from the retail market, smallest avenue for growth that Electrolux is looking at is the projects market—or continuous with condominium and other buildings for the appliances that come with their furnished units.

"We're just starting to enter that market. It's difficult to just enter, but once you've made inroads and give them the products that suit their requirements, it's easier to get more deals," Israelz says.

"The projects market is not a big part of our business yet. We're still mostly retail-driven. But whenever there's a building being built, we see an opportunity to sell our products. We sell by products that suit small spaces. Our products are good units of the future. We actually are (the trend) ahead of the others," she adds.

Babas relates that in Singapore and some other markets, a big part of sales come from builders.

The Philippine market has the potential to take advantage of this trend as well, as evidenced by its ability to evolve, he says. Electrolux Philippines is now one of the most significant businesses in the Pan-Asian brand's Southeast Asian business.

"In the '70s, we were doing **door sales of vacuum cleaners** here in the Philippines. That's the Electrolux Man that you remember. Because the company has grown since the time it started. The Philippines has really grown dramatically," he says.

> 'We focus on ease of use, not on hi-tech buttons'

mobility connect to help keep rug, etc. clean from settling.

It also introduced in the Philippine market a new split-type air-conditioner that uses a member of air purification technologies, all perfect for the local market.

The company's Ultra High Efficiency Electrolux Air Ultra technology removes more than 99 percent of bacteria and 99 percent of dust particles, while its Active Plasma Filtration System reduces the incidence of allergies and asthma attacks by 10 to bring out almost 99 percent of airborne allergens, 95 percent of bacteria, and 85 percent of viruses.

"We're all for innovating to improve the quality of people's lives. We won't give them things that they don't understand, things that come with buttons that they don't even know how to use. We go with the philosophy 'Thinking of you' because we think of the customer and how to improve their lives. We focus on ease of use, not on hi-tech buttons," Electrolux has also launched for major appliances brands that are ozone-friendly.

He adds that Electrolux also places emphasis on making products that are environment friendly—energy efficient and recyclable.

Prospects

For the rest of the year, Israelz says Electrolux will be launching more new products here, as a bid to expand its range and cover as many appliance categories as possible.

While the brand's strength is in the Philippine market this year will be anchored on its refrigerator and air-conditioners, the stand-and-mixer brand Kenwood is still one the launch of new washing machine models, she relates.

Electrolux's upcoming top-load models, she says, will further boost the brand's strong position in the laundry category where its front-load models hold the top spot.

"The appliance market is a very competitive market. Even if consumers change their appliances only once every three to five years, the market is still very competitive. We really have to protect our dominance in the markets where we are playing," she says, adding that this can be done by constantly introducing innovative products.

"Last year, we posted single-digit growth even when the industry has gone down significantly declined. It was probably the biggest decline that the industry has ever experienced. And we have an aggressive target for 2010. We want to be a dominant number player in all categories. Air-conditioners and refrigerators will play a major role in the achievement of our goals. We're targeting double-digit growth for the year," she adds.

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Tiger Woods' financial losses may be short-lived

CHICAGO—TIGER WOODS may have lost up to $35 million in sponsorship deals after his extra-marital affairs came to light but any financial pain may be short-lived as the the world number one returns to golf competition.

Woods's return on Thursday for the US Masters offers him a chance to begin rewriting a story dominated over the past several months by revelations about his private life and subsequent apologies to his wife and fans.

Since a late November car accident exposed his personal life, Accenture, AT&T and PepsiCo's Gatorade brand have dumped Woods as a spokesperson, costing the golfer an estimated $25 million to $35 million in annual compensation, according to sponsorship research firm Sponsor.

If Procter & Gamble's Gillette or EMC Mort Honorary Louis Vuitton's Tag Heuer—both of which have dropped Woods from their marketing...also stop paying the golfer, the loss could reach to $50 million, Sponsor said.

Woods earned a reported $100 million annually from endorsements before the scandal.

If Masters win, or even a strong showing, however, would be the first step to recovery, analysts said.

"It's a short-term loss," Boston University sports management professor Chris Calabrese said. "You've got to get his game back. he will revamp most of his image if not exceed them.

"There's really nobody else on that game who has the star appeal that he does."

Worthy investment

Many sponsors have stood by him, including athletic shoe and clothing maker Nike, videogame publishers Electronic Arts and trading card and memorabilia company Upper Deck.

While spokesperson for Woods have not addressed his lost endorsement deals or whether new agreements are in the works, the golfer told a news conference on Monday that he understood why some sponsors had dropped him and hoped to show he would be profitable for them in the future.

"Hopefully I can prove to the other companies going forward that I am a worthy investment, that I can help their company grow," he told reporters in majuela, Georgia.

A strong showing by Woods this week and going forward, as well as a scandal, low fanfare, should mean a cool, unruly quick rebound, analysts said.

"It's harder to be king of the hill, get knocked off and then get back up, than it is to climb your way up," said Matthew Colton, analyst at market research firm NPD Group.

"But all it's going to take is for Tiger to play well and his value as a spokesperson for a product not only goes right back to where it was ... but even one increase," NPD is studying a February poll that found while one-third of US consumers said their opinion of Woods had declined, most planned no change to their purchase behavior based on the scandal. Colton said the new results would be similar.

Calabrese said the blemished, more human Woods might even attract new types of sponsors he had not previously.

"Brands from Nike and EA Sports all the way through Accenture and AT&T clearly had to take a step back and distance themselves from Tiger," said John Hargrie, chief executive of marketing firm Van Wagner Sports and Entertainment.

"If he wins, the timeline for people pushing things in the past could accelerate a little bit."

Less money

In the short term, any new deals may be far less money and fewer years with companies whose products focus more directly on golf, analysts said.

IKEA Marie College poll released recently, 11 percent of Americans surveyed said Woods would be more of an attraction to the US Masters, while 40 percent felt he would be more of a distraction.

> 'Nothing breeds a following like success'

However, a return to past dominance by Woods would surely have him chip companies back over the next several years.

Certainly, the reputation of the world's first $1 billion athlete has been tarnished.

In the latest Davie Brown Index—used by corporate clients to determine a celebrity's ability to influence consumers—Woods' appeal ranked 2,999th, down from 46th before the scandal.

That puts him in the company of the likes of actor Gary Coleman and Fox News reporter and former talk show host Geraldo Rivera, compared with actor Matt Damon and late musician Frank Sinatra before the scandal.

Woods has even become a sort of punch line. The Boston Phoenix, an alternative weekly, just ranked him the most country stars on its annual top 100 list (http://bphoenix.com/).

Not all is bad news for the 14-time major winner, however.

In a Marist College poll released on Monday, 11 percent of American surveyed said Woods would be more of an attraction to the US Masters, while 40 percent felt he would be more of a distraction.

The figure for self-described golf fans rating Woods as attraction was 16/38 percent.

Another Golfsmith International and sales of Tiger Woods-branded products, including hats, shirts, pants and balls, were up 31 percent from Oct. 1, 2009 through mid-March compared with the same period last year.

EA Sports is releasing the finished version of its online Tiger Woods golf game this week and will plans to roll out the next version of its Tiger videogame in June.

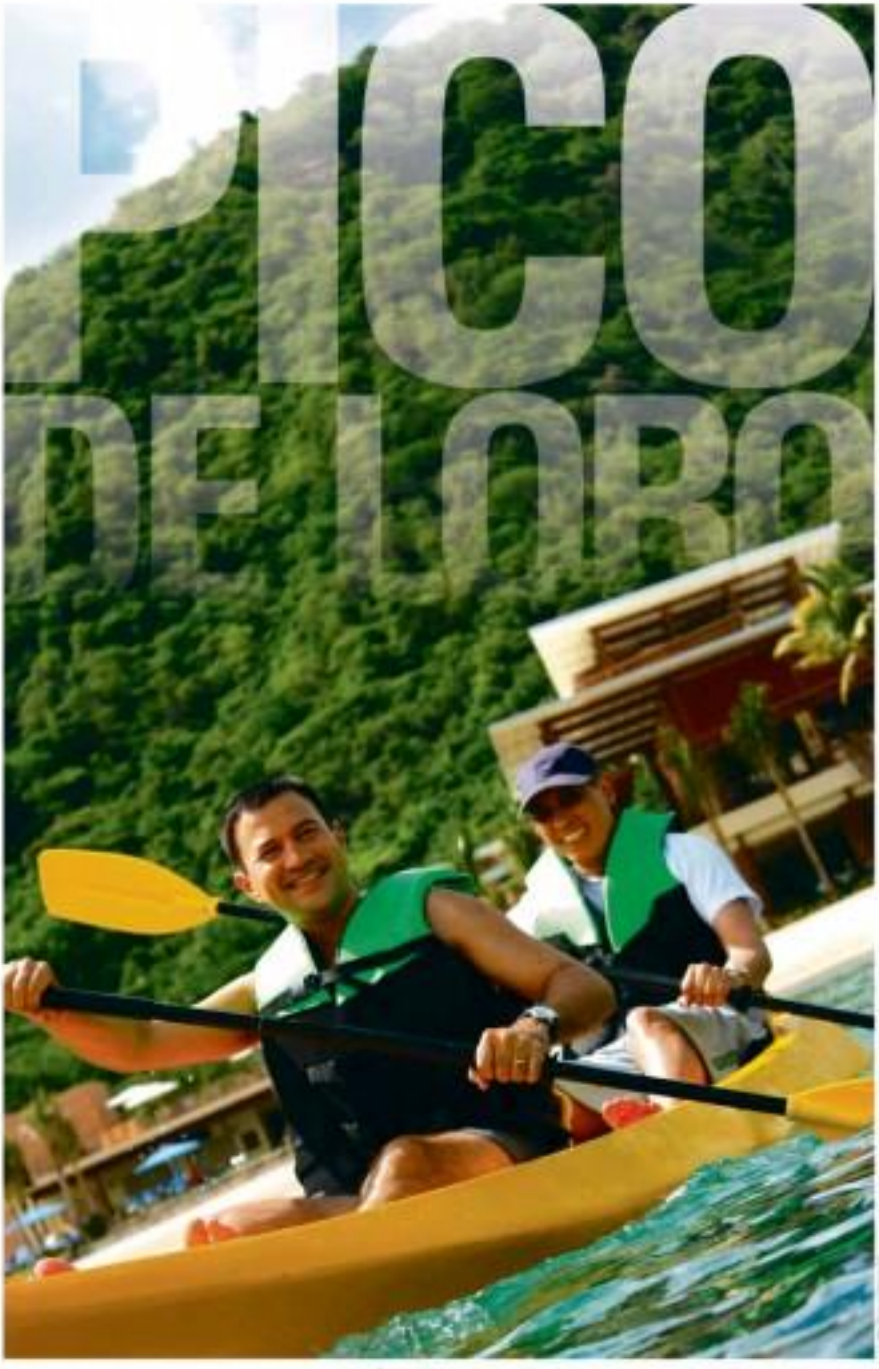
Upper Deck has begun selling a limited number of Woods-autographed items priced as much as $1,800, and will offer 25 autographed Masters Champion shirts at $2,000 apiece if he wins.

There also have been reports that Nike is offering a TV ad with Woods, although the company spokesperson would not comment.

In the end, analysts agreed winning cures all.

"It's like the New York Yankees," NPD's Colton said, referring to the popular baseball team. "You love to hate them, but they win, they win every body loves them again. Nothing breeds a following like success."

—Reuters



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A team player's style

A former Ateneo basketball player, Martin Quimson knows the value of teamwork without sacrificing his individual stamp

MARTIN QUIMSON'S name sounds familiar to UAAP basketball fans, as he used to play with the juniors and later, the seniors, of Ateneo de Manila University.

A towering 6'4", he used his height and skill all those years. His interest in sports, however, began at age 8, when he learned soccer.

Joining the Makati Football School, he was among those who represented the Philippines in the Children's World Cup in Sweden.

Martin grew up a team player, who must follow the play. His coaches taught him that winning could happen only if they all stuck together.

Off court, he kept the discipline. Through the long and rigorous training, Martin never quit, learning lessons in humility during difficult games. He also learned that one must never give

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Rina Silayan Dee, Contributor

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A team player's style

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Glowing skin with new whitening primer

Of 400 Asian women, 91 percent reported 'luminous and enhanced overall' skin after 10 days of use

By Cherbe F. Maral

AN ESTIMATED 40 PERCENT OF total skincare sales in the Philippines comes from whitening products. And so an industry with a valued worth of P22 billion, that should explain skincare brands' enthusiastic efforts to develop and manufacture newness and creams to cater to this massive demand. Ergo, a

SUNSTAR 20

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Kiehl's Ultra Facial Hair Prevention, Purenology Hydrasumm Therapy Masque, Phyto-Citrus Shampoo, L'Oréal Professionnel Vitamino Color Conditioner and Kiehl's Sunflower Shampoo

Hair-care tips for summer

TIS HERE ALL SET FOR summer, but aren't you for- gotten something? You need to care for the sun part of your body that always sees the light of day: your hair.

It's not just about tying up big locks in a pony tail or wig- ging off the ultra-polished look so wear a sun and worry style. Don't let the temperature creep up on your hair. Stave away the languishing city energy and give your locks a head boost- ing by the rising tempera- tures.

Here are a few hair care tips to keep you looking like an all-natural beauty.

Isabel Bacay, Bumbingan Asia

Tips

- If you spend lots of time outdoors and want to spice up your look, consider ad- ding a little lemon juice through your hair. The sun will lighten those strands faster than your locks with- out the lemon. This will give you an attractive, un- intended look. It's also easier on your budget than salon highlights.
- If you like to swim for a longer period, sprin- kle leave-on conditioner under the swim cap to help ward off damage from chlorine and salt water.
- Be sure to deep-condi- tion your hair at least once a week, especially if you plan to swim a lot. Hair tends to become dry, dull and brittle if it goes through soak and dry repetition after.
- Avoid using the blow dryer during summer. Its use gives you enough heat al- ready. Instead, use an alco- hol-free texturizer to do the work.

The secret to summer look is looking gorgeous without seeming like you tried too hard. Who better to ask than those that do exactly that? I spoke to five ladies to find out what products they use to keep their hair turned dazzling hot and hu- mid days.

My super must- have hair item, when in the beach, is keratine Solid hair perfec- tor—Hilka Liqi- dantes Blackness, sealed, en- veryoneuse

For my hair, I use Nexxus shampoo and conditioner. While under the sun, I put Nexxus Hot OH!Net leave-in hair treatment.—Gerlie Bon- dad, model, jewelry design- er

Beach Hair molder, Moroc- 8 Elixir Obsession, Elnett Satinesse with Royal Ac- le.—Ana Mikoto, professional- st model

I'm obsessed with Schwarzkopf Professional BC Moisture Kick Spray Condi- tioner. It's the first thing I've tried that keeps my tenacious curly hair from exploding in the heat.—Sheila Encarnacion, medical student

I use Kiehl's Sunflower Shampoo. I splurge on this because it's the only one that smells so good and lasts the whole season.—Bea Zantua, banker

Products are available at Rustan's, Kiehl's in Greenbelt 3, Beach Fix, David's Salon, Bingham, Paradise and salons nationwide.

How to wear orange-red lipstick

THIS SUMMER'S MAKEUP IS ALL ABOUT bright pops of color and pretty, carefree looks you can easily create yourself. Any- thing light, breezy and happy works, and one of the top trends we can't seem to get enough of is orange and lipstick.

Fresh and confident, today's orange-red has gone old at a young, energetic vibe.

"It looks fierce and intense—definitely for people who like attention," describes Shu Uemura makeup artist Angelique Dri- galous. Whether matte, shiny or sheer (for the less adventurous), the current hot-can't-touch lip craze is on.

Pairing this hue with your eyes can be a little tricky. It is easy to put them a shade than clashes with your skin- tone or wear a hue so bright it doesn't match your personality. There are many ways to wear a trend and make it your own—take it from the expert and learn how to wear the sunny color.

- Know what works for your complexion. "Pale skinned ladies should go for sheer versions of the orange-based lipstick, so as to pre- vent their skin from looking sallow," ex- plains Drigalous.

Kelly Hita, Blocks of the trade

Meanwhile, tan shouldn't feel limited to only sheer finishes. Adding a bit of bronzer on your cheeks warms up your skintones and balances the intensity of orange lips.

"The darker and more olive your com- plexion, the deeper shade of orange you can pull off."

- Make the color last. Dry, chapped lips look terrible no matter what color of lip- stick you wear.

"Lips should be exfoliated and well- moi- turized before applying any lipstick," re- minds Drigalous.

Gently brushing your lips with a wet toothbrush and ap- plying a lip primer or moisturi- zer after does the trick. To make your lip color last for hours, "use a lip brush to apply the lip color, this allows the color to go on evenly and smoothly. Then, blot lips with a tissue and add another layer to instantly de- look."

- Keep the focus on your lips. Wearing a strong lip color can overpower the rest of your makeup. Make sure that your orange-red lips are paired with just a bit of foundation and mascara.

"A strong brow, clean matte face and strik- ing black lashes will go well with a matte- finish orange lip," Drigalous suggests. "Or keep the color sheer and keep the rest of the face clean. With a shade as strong as this, you hardly need anything more on your face."

Strawberry scrub, lymphatic-drainage massage and other summer treatments

SUMMER MEANS BEACHES AND MORE skin exposure. It isn't just the skin of the face we have to worry about but the rest of the body as well.

For those who will hit the beach in the skimpiest of swimsuits, I have found a very thorough Brazilian manner who guarantees the smoothest, sun-kissed result on the bikini area front and back. The woman's name is Jessica and you will find her at Nos- ka Face Body & Soul (NFBS).

I came in for Nos's customary eye treat- ments—Strawberry Body Scrub followed by a 90-minute lymphatic-drainage mas- sage with Maderoil.

Bikini waxing was just an afterthought, but that was the most memorable for me. It was, as I was told before, "forget" as the bikini area they do that as well. The most requested jus- urvs are bust, overnight, spades and ar- rows.

The Strawberry Scrub is very gentle but

SPRING color forward: pink

MAKEOVER 911

Kenny Salas

effective as it is suitable for the most sensi- tive skin. I would highly recommend the lymphatic drainage massage as men and women who are prone to water retention on the calves, ankles and stomach.

The legs become so much slim- mer the next day and my shoes fit better. Also, I will not have to worry over legs swollen only those afflicted with water retention.

Open-toe sandals season

The moment the temperature soared, I took all my sandals out of storage. The theme one has to have perfectly repainted.

The most requested polish shade is taupe—a gray beige made famous by Chanel's Pirate- edition. Have reasonably priced look-alikes are: OPI Yes, Don't Know Jacques!, Orly Private Chatting, Essie Wink Muffs, Commander in Chic by Sally Hansen and MAC's Whats, from Cleos—a more dark taupe.

The color is not very flattering on the pale olive skintone but looks fantastic on the extremely fair or slightly tanned with rosy or golden undertones.

If taupe is not your color of choice, there's Orly's Rhum collection for Spring 2010 inspired by the flowers that bloom in spring. There are six colors in all but the most popular is Slumbering Vine, a Deep Ely- sian crime as green seems to be the trend.

My picks: Wild Wisteria, dark lilac-violet cream; Blushing Bud, magenta créme as the bright pink signals springtime for me; and Thawed Rose, red-wine créme that can be worn all year round and flattering to most skintones. Pure persona is Sheer crème and Ginger Lily is burnt orange shimmer. Orly is available at Pure Nails, Landmark, Ace Marche salons, Nail tropics and Metrosalon.

March highlights

Lady Gaga and Cyndi Lauper are the newest muses of MAC's new Elaine Sprinkles of Pixie each. What makes Viva Glam lipsticks so special is that the proceeds go to the men, women and children who are affected by HIV and Aids.

The BMC Aids fund's quest is for women, to continue fund- ing a cure. My favorite shade will always be Viva Glam I, a very universally flattering deep red created in 1994. Vi Gaga is a light blue-tinted pink and Vi Cyndi, a mid-tone deep coral.

MAC Whats, from Glam and pixie

These two additions will only be available for 12 months.

Check out the Spring 2010 collection at MAC counters. Your preferred color in the forecast says a lot about one's personality: pink, the sweet; coral, summer; plum, wicked or luxuriously excessive.

E-mail the author at kennysalas@yahoo.com

Glowing skin with new whitening primer

From page D1

dazzling buffet of pots and tubes for the consumer.

The American direct-selling company Mary Kay, Inc. (amway), recently launched its whitening line with the addition of an eight- product to its already seven-part whitening program. The MoluCEP Whiten- ing System is touted as the improved ver- sion of its predecessor, which it replaced, called PureWhite. MoluCEP was first launched here a year ago.

The new MoluCEP Whitening Primer with SPF 15 puts the original line that in- cludes a foaming cleanser, moisture mask, freshener, essence cream, day moisturizer, night cream and dark-spot serum.

The primer is a cream-to-powder formu- la that goes under one's foundation or makeup, and is claimed to have light-dif- fusing qualities that even out and brighten the appearance of dullness. When dry, it has a matte finish and comes in a refillable compact form.

Like many beauty products in the mar- ket, Mary Kay taps ingredients from nature for this line. Its base key elements are the ci- tronol C-rich kakadu plum extract, the lico- ice licorice extract and helianthus annuus seed extract, and the skin-conditioning agent called lactobacillus ferment.

The five three are all potent antioxi- dants, which counteract the production of melanin from over-sun exposure; kakadu plum is native to the Australian outback, while the lotus lentils comes from the Mediterranean.

Specific market

MoluCEP is formulated es- pecially for the Asian skin. This is fairly typical of Mary Kay to create products to cater to specific market de- mands, according to brand manager Ginny Bautista-Camacho. Asia is the biggest market for whitening skin care, fol- by countries like Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, China.

Of 400 Asian women who test- ed the MoluCEP system, 91 percent claimed to have "luminous and enhanced overall" appearance on the skin after 10 days of use. And but 90 percent claimed to have brighter skin and more even skintone over the same period, while 78 percent said they observed their skin clarity was re- moved.

Twenty-five percent said they saw "im- provement in the appearance of visible dark spots" after 12 weeks of use.

Unlike other direct-selling brands, Mary Kay is better known for its skincare prod- ucts than its other business segments like makeup. Many persons of its business here, for instance, comprise skincare, Camacho said.

"The skincare category in the Philippines is a P22-billion market, with whitening as a major driver for skin care," she added. "It is estimated that whitening products contri- bute at least 40 percent of total skincare sales (based on Euromonitor). That we are out big on advertising campaigns because we know more in our people and value FACE. Many we are in selling as well. Our sales force members are our walking advertisements as we invest a lot on them, living walking advertisements, lovers and avid users of the brand, this keeps us at par with the biggest competitors who 'hand-sell' their products."

Person-to-person

Even as modern Filipino consumers are largely trooping to the country's malls and specialty stores to buy their beauty prod- ucts, direct-selling brands continue to thrive, as the person-to-person approach still seems to have its appeal to certain people.

The relationship and trust built between an independent beauty consultant, as Mary Kay calls its direct-selling agents, and the customer has its benefits, Camacho pointed out.

"With this deeper and personal relation- ship, it is more likely that a woman will lis- ten to the advice from a person she has close ri- ad affinity with versus someone she just happens to talk to in the mall," she said.

"Each Mary Kay independent beauty consultant provides her customers with one-on-one beauty advice and the latest in- formation and instructions on skincare, col- or cosmetics and application techniques, typically in the privacy of the customer's own home or office.

"Consumers are taught to apply the prod- ucts themselves so they can easily replicate the results. In the Mary Kay world, we teach our consultants to let their customers try before they buy; as Mary Kay is a firm be- liever in self-selling."

BEFORE/AND: AFTER photos of a MoluCEP Whitening System user at the end of a 12-week clinical study

New hair treatments

Vanity Basket

PANTENE LASHINGS (TO LAUNCH) EDITION Japan Treatments Line for summer. These are Daily Repair DP Treatments to upgrade the conditioning step. Silky Smooth Care is for naturally straight hair, while Extra Damage Care works for those who love styling or the outdoors. Both treatments also have up to two times more conditioning to give that smoothly shine despite the summer heat. Pantene Extra Damage Care Hair Repair Mask has up to three times more conditioning to help prevent split ends. Available at all leading supermarkets nationwide.

Anti-dandruff shampoo

Head & Shoulders Cool Menthol Anti-Dandruff Shampoo contains zinc pyrithione (ZPT), an effective dandruff-fighting ingredient. Available at all leading supermarkets and drugstores.

3-step hair repair

Sunsilk's Damage Repair System is enriched with Silan Serum Hybrid Complex which works in hair restoration. The three-step damage repair solution begins with Complete Damage Repair shampoo, which gently cleanses damaged hair while reconstructing beneath the hair surface and filling damaged cuticle crevices inside. Sunsilk Damage Repair Nourishing Conditioner softens and nourishes hair. Use it with Sunsilk Damage Repair Serum and Mask for three times more intensely nourished hair and reduces hair breakage.

Hydrating cream

Olay Total Effects with Cooling Essence has a re-balanced lightweight formula that releases hydrating water in a cooling burst on skin, plus mint ordered for a tingly sensation. It also has glycerol, a hydrating ingredient found naturally in one's skin, combined with the Olay Total Effects Hydra Wattle Complex, which helps fight the seven signs of skin aging. Available at leading supermarkets and drugstores.

DERMACARE Professional Skin, Hair and Spa

Beauty clinic and spa opens its 26th outlet in Tarlac

DERMACARE PROFESSIONAL Skin, Hair & Spa will open its 26th outlet on April 30, 10 a.m. in SM Tarlac. General manager Amanda Palmo has opened Dermacare Lane Well, Hair & Spa at the 3rd, The Block, SM North Edsa, Quezon City and Ayala Center in Cebu City. Soon to open are branches in SM Bacolod, Pampanga and SM Cebu. Bubbie and events director Odear Bautista is the clinic's consultant.

Services provided are the trusted ingredients like the plant algae from the mountains of Bontoc. This is used in their massage service.

For every purchase of Dermacare products and use of its services and facilities, a customer contributes to the Jacelle L. Palmo Scholarship Foundation that helps poor deserving students. E-mail dermacarephilippines@yahoo.com.

New beauty salon and spa opens in Parañaque

AMANDA HAIR, SALON AND SPA WILL open May 1 at 208 Aguinaldo Highway, Barangay Don Bosco, Parañaque. Amanda offers hair and hairstyle (even for kids), massage and waxing. A foot/hand spa package includes exfoliating rub, mask, paraffin treatment, complete pedicure or manicure regimen and massage. A joint venture of friends Jinky and Rosario and Kathleen Sagsa, it will operate from 10 a.m. to midnight. For reservations or appointment for home service, text or call 0920-7536977 or 0922-7575299.

Rico Lascano in Singapore art exhibit

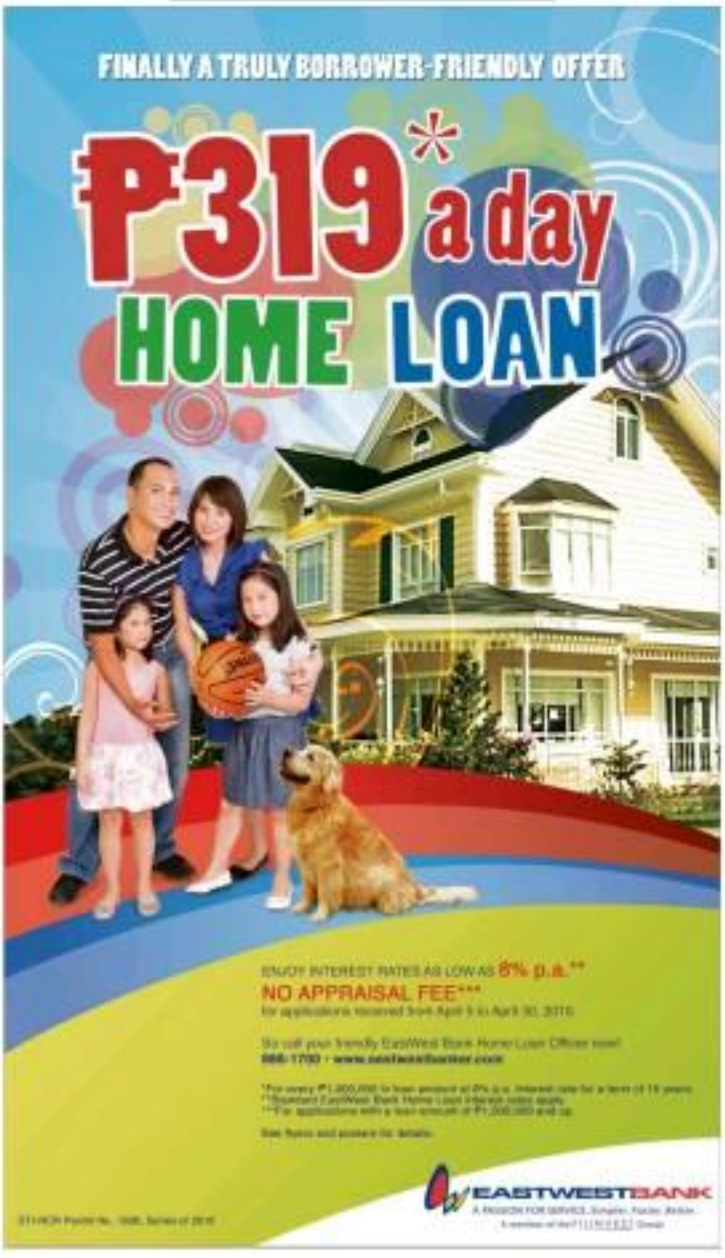
Filipino artist Rico Lascano joins Asian contemporary painters Tang Seng Koh and Soon Lai Wai in a Singapore exhibit, The group exhibit, Whispering Horizon, explores the connections between landscape, memory and the sublime. Lascano, who is known for his tranquil, meditative Watercapes, diverges in this nearly-total interpretation of water and flowers. Where once it was all stillness and placidity, here water is revealed in a state of transience and celebration. And like all achieving song reflecting on the profound joy of the moment, the paintings include ballows by Lascano's wife, Charito. The exhibit runs April 9-28 at Marlenebourg Arts, Blk. 28 Lai Teck Chatered Boon Basic, Level 2, Singapore.

Asiana Airlines begins flights to Ibaraki, Japan

Asiana Airlines, Korea's multi-awarded carrier, has begun services to Ibaraki, Japan. Asiana Airlines recently held its inaugural flight from its hub in Incheon International Airport to the newly opened Ibaraki Airport, making it the first Seoul international carrier to service the route. Asiana Airlines President and CEO Young-Doo Yoon, Seoul Regional Aviation Administration Commissioner Young-Chang Ryu, Incheon International Airport Vice President Young-Keun Lee and other airline industry officials attended the event. Ibaraki is highly regarded as the paradise of flowers in Japan, being home to some of their most famous gardens such as Kairakuen and Fukuroda Falls. Ibaraki also has many springs, golf courses and shopping outlets. The area is a renowned tourist spot for travelers from Tokyo. Asiana Airlines will operate daily flights to the area's route, with an Airbus A320 seating 141 passengers.

Aliwan Fiesta

Aliwan Fiesta pokes to the streets anew on April 02-04, with more than 3,000 street dancers, performers and artistes led by their regional troupes, vying for the million-peso grand prize. Presented by Manila Broadcasting Company, Star City and the Cultural Center of the Philippines, in cooperation with the Pasay Tourism Committee of SM Mall of Asia and the cities of Pasay and Manila, the annual cultural extravaganza brings together in a single setting champion street dance contingents from the most popular festivals throughout the archipelago, for the benefit of tourists who want a microcosm of life in our 7,107 islands. For inquiries, call 8330128, e-mail aliwanfiesta@gmail.com or log on to the official website, www.aliwanfiesta.com.ph.



The Kultura Experience

Summer and Shopping at Kultura Filipino

In our aim to bring to our clients the very best of the Philippines, we asked some regular shoppers to share their comments with us on how they experience **Kultura Filipino.** For this summer section, we approached Valeria and Florencia Yarad, two very hip sisters, who consider Kultura a must as a shopping destination.

"All our friends back home love these!"
Souvenir shirt by ***Kultura Filipino***

Valeria and Florencia have been in the Philippines since 2006. Back then, their Kultura adventure consisted in accompanying their mother to the Makati branch to buy items for their home. "Especially furniture items and home decoration," recalls Valeria, "and it was then that we discovered that Kultura had so much more to offer." Going to Kultura became a weekly habit, as they always had something new. "And given the low prices, for us students, the products are very affordable. *"Where did you get that?"* was a question heard more than once, every time I wore those super cool accessories, especially the bangles and necklaces," says Florencia.

"We took back capiz boxes, photo frames, nice napkin rings, magnets and other novelty souvenirs. We feel the craftmanship in the Philippines is unique and we love to share this with people who do not have a chance to visit this country. And we can buy so much with our budget, as the prices are really good." An anecdote: "We all loved this one resort dress so much and so we bought it in all colors and wanted more to give to our family and friends, so we ended up going from one branch to another: Mall of Asia, Megamall, and even up to North Edsa to buy more. We ended up buying something different at every store..." "Another area we cannot ignore when we visit, is the ***Pinoy Delicacies*** section, where we always end up buying mango tarts and dried mangoes when already on our way out" says Valeria. "We can be considered "Kultura-addicts" according to Florencia, "When we leave to go back to Chile, and come back during the holidays, number 1 on our agenda will be Kultura – final's for sure!"

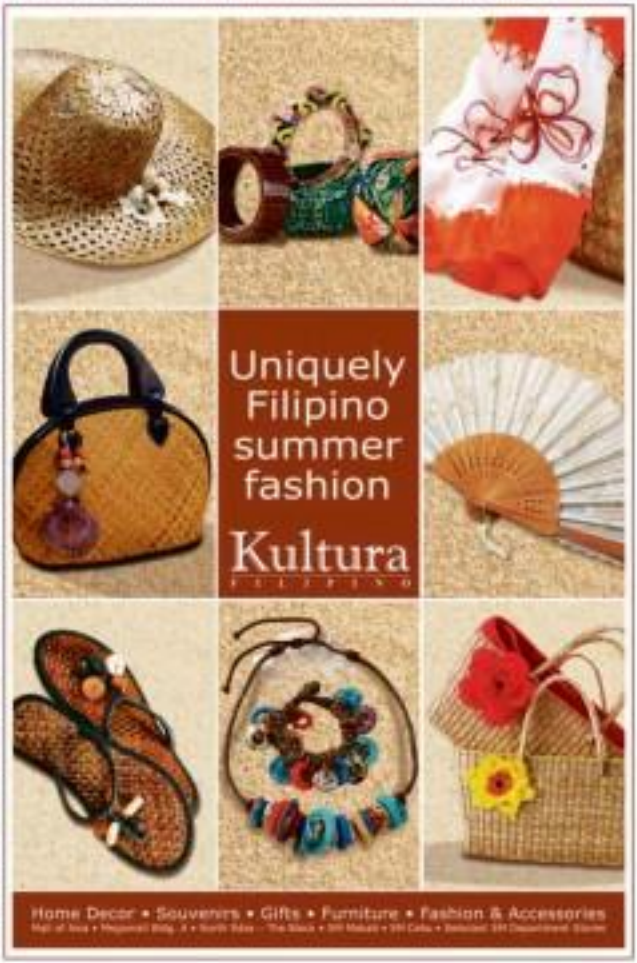
The friend system on different takes on matching linen dresses by ***Kultura Filipino.***

"Since Kultura extended its sales area last Christmas period and doubled the store in Makati, we were truly overwhelmed by the variety of items. ***Magarbo***, their accessories brand is what we bought for our friends back home-who rave about the designs and the Manila-print T-shirts. They even have large sizes, fit for foreigners, which has always been hard to find!" exclaims Flo, as friends call her.

Florencia goes resort-chic in a linen dress and hat by ***Kultura Filipino****, accessorized by* ***Magarbo*** *and bag by* ***Rizalo****.*

"I can't get enough of the bags!"- enthuses Valeria, who will soon go back to Chile, their home country, and is worried about taking her collection back with her. " Most of our home leave gifts come from Kultura.

"The bags at Kultura are just too much!"
Valeria enjoys the wide selection of bags at Kultura's fashion section in a sky print tunfolo dress by ***Kultura Filipino****, accessorized by* ***Magarbo*** *and clutch by* ***John Carlo****.*



LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty

Hair goes short and shaggy

But Laurent Herbert of Franck Provost admits Filipinas are culturally predisposed to long hair

By Margo C. Enriquez
Contributor

SHORT, SHAGGY and a diagonal hairline from the nape to the chin is the way to go this summer, says Laurent Herbert, salon manager of Franck Provost Hair Studios. It's simple, easy-to-maintain, chic and flexible enough to be styled for special occasions.

Herbert points out that the 2010 trends are more cultural—merging from plain crops (à la Coco Mediguez) to cut-length asymmetrical bobs. However, they don't easily translate into wearable or suitable styles for Franck Provost's clients. But the French hairdresser underscores that he doesn't follow trends.

Ultimately, the fashionable hairstyle is the result of a collaboration between the client and the style, he says.

Hair care is vital. He warns against overprocessing such as chemical perms and permanent blowdrying.

Hair relaxers and rebonding make the hair shaft, rearrange the hair structure to make the hair bonds malleable for smoother hair. The change of hair structure becomes permanent. Skin with hair coloring. The lighter the color, the more pigments are removed. Lauren underscores that rebonding or relaxing should not overlap with highlighting.

Neither should highlights be meshed with digital perm or permanent blowdry. The digital perm creates waves using heat. Although it makes styling easier, it poses potential damage if the perm solution or the chemist's technique is inaccurate.

The permanent blowdry applies hair-ators on the hair which is soaked with a hot iron to straighten. Many hair. Think Nicole Richie and Jennifer Lopez. The hair is processed for more several hours. Hair is subjected to further damage if speeds another chemical luster for highlights.

For mature women, Herbert believes heat highlights can be aging. Subdery is the key. He also advises varying the hair-care products. The endorses TON-

PLANE MAGNIFIQUE Lan with Poly Hechanova

VICTOR Rodriguez, Zaira Rodriguez, Jose Concepcion Jr. and Carlos del Rosario

BUSINESSMAN and international Rotarian Rafael "Paeng" Hechanova and his wife, Cosme Manila's namesake nephew, Poly Concepcion Hechanova

DOLLY Tankunhee, Kat Hong and Dhi Feliciano

NELLIE Bongcon, Nena Calderon, Thelma Cano and Bubbie Calabar

JOJI Delgong, Cosette Tankunhee

MARIA del Rosario, Fr. Tong Hawker and Prince and Marsha Peña

RENNA Angeles and her mom, Poly Hechanova, with presiding Diana Trajano, Melissa Mariel, Bea and Merlin Vazquez, and Tina Mercado

Who bought the diamond-studded Birkin at Hermès store opening?

CRIS Albert and Suri Tan

EDGELGADO and Ruby Tan

BEA Zobel and Monica Zobel

AYALA Chairman Fernando Zobel, Kit Zobel, Hermès executive Bertrand Michaud and Lucila Zobel

BAILARELA, Pepe Fernandez and Anne Maria Gagosi

IT WAS ONE CELEBRATION MEANT FOR 20 of her closest pals. But when one woman's surname was Beatrice, Holy Concepcion Hechanova, celebrated her birthday bash could also limit her guest list? So it was inevitable that the number of invitees ballooned to 90. This was where her daughters, Bianca R. Angeles and Bianca R. Trajano, took charge of the finals.

The dinner buffet had two stations in their humongous dining room. Superbly done by La Tasca, the menu included — no cold dishes, but mainly cocotte and to die for fricassée Strasbourg, three kinds of salads, two kinds of risotto, desserts and three cakes from the celebrant's own kitchen, dahlings.

There were purposeful flowers scattered all over the main floor of the mansion, exquisitely done by Bernard's.

As always, Moly stayed on with the first of us, who were the last ones to leave, dahlings. We wish our Queen for the Day Moly Hechanova a happy, happy 75th birthday.

Hermès in Manila

Hermès, an awesome luxury brand, recently opened its doors in Manila. Hermès CEO Patrick Thomas said in his welcome speech: "We are so proud to be opening our first store in Manila, an Asian city with a long and rich history that positively blends with Western influences. A true homage to the 17th-year-old Parisian house's exquisite artistry."

SLUG, the renowned architectural design agency responsible for Hermès stores all over the world, made the Hermès logo easily visible on the first floor of the façade: charcoal grey by day and easily lit by night.

The grandest happening had a complete list of our town's A-listers, dahlings.

There came, they came and they bought, bought and bought. I had to go back a week later to check out something I was going to spread on his superb paintings.

And I've never seen even a measure Birkin bags running out of their flannel protector sacks, were proudly by those women of manner and substance and paid for by their rich husbands. More than 30 of these bags were carried by these women.

Jewelry was not the accessory of the night, dahlings. It was the Hermès Dalton. Adorable Kit Silvestre Zobel pony-tailed her hair with a scarf, favored hard enamel bracelets and five to six rings. The men hit the boho shirts, sashes, pullovers and soft trays. Two gorgeous Hermès saddles were sold while there many were ordered.

Ayala sacrid itself with the Alcott Guests' turns in three steps, which ended at the Ayala Museum.

Yes, palanggas, as usual, open is the problem. But the major question of the night was: "Who got the awesome purple croc Birkin with encrusted diamond chips that went for a cool P1.2 mn, hm?"

Well, dahlings, I know who bought this bag of bags. She got seven other regular Birkins that go for P500,000, more or less. She said she will give them "as presents to my friends on their birthdays." Wow! Only me who is wee, palanggas, because I'll keep most on this, dahlings.

Silk scarf drapes and turbo hamsaka some silver, dahlings, on this night of Hermès.

The genius behind this store and its grand opening was the brilliant and creative Maria Knight-ok, no less. Take your well-deserved bow na.

Hermès, exclusively distributed by Luxury Concepts Inc., is available at Greenbelt 3.

Nikki Teodoro birthday

The woman behind the campaign of presidential aspirant Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro is more taller than his spouse, the congresswoman of Tarlac, Nikki Prieto Teodoro. She recently hosted an intimate birthday dinner for her close pals and some die-hard supporters of her husband at the classy and exquisite Italian restaurant, Gusto Ristorante Boutique, palanggas.

Helping the hostess entertain was Victoria "Vicky" Pimentel Lagdameo, who served her fabulous Italian recipes and wines. While having a fun time, another smart and eye-catching beauty, Shalani Soledad, councilor of Valenzuela, was seen around the room with her friends. Shalani went in to say hello to her friends, we realizing there was a dinner party for Nikki and that most of the guests were wearing Teodoro's campaign color, green. One inside, she greeted Nikki and chatted for a while with some of the other guests.

That's what I call manners of substance who are absolutely civilized. That's what class is all about, dahlings.

By 10pm we came here one of those women of the presidential candidates as our next First Lady, dahlings.

I almost forgot the other guests: Ilonen Enriquez Lagdameo, Micky Lopez Ramos, Teddy and Ann Dado, Francis Hangkipan, Larry Silva, Joy and Mely Lagdameo, gentleman of all seasons Guilly Benitez, and a close pal of Nikki from her school days in Switzerland, local server Mariñas Bower, palanggas.

BOLING Reyes

MENE and Jun Lucero

FORTUNE Ledesma and Eva Cuyo

MENE Martel and husband Randy Francisco

HOSTESS Nikki Teodoro and her pal from their Switzerland school days, Veronica Porter

WHEN SIZZLERS MEET. Celebrator and tourism Rep. Alice Prieto-Teodoro with Valenzuela councilor Jund Bascara of presidential aspirant Nonoy Aquino's Student Council and Guilly Rufino

FRENCH gentleman Monsieur Bertrand Michaud, regional director of Hermès Inc., Middle East and Southeast Asia; Anton Heang, EVP Stone Specialists, Inc.; visiting Frenchman David Emsellem, Hermès regional commercial director; and Mario Katigbak, general manager of Luxury Concepts, Inc.

AMBASSADOR Bienvenido Tantoco Sr., Bianca Epenshade, Inc. president, with Zenaida Ramirez, Bea Zobel and Ayala Chairman emeritus Jaime Zobel de Ayala

BIZUMBA Rome and Vesna Puno

SHAGGY CUT. Asymmetrical haircut with short back length gradating to long face layers is Inez's Edgar Morales's recommendation. Dagou Fernandez embellishes black highlights to enhance the personality and edginess in the cut.

SHAGGY. Thick hair is given texture with lots of layers. The cut follows the natural waves of the hair. Dark brown color with auburgine highlights flatters the fair skin tone.

Hair goes short and shaggy

From page E1

all's wide ranged such as alternating shine-enhancer shadingsor for highlights such as pair care shampoos to prevent damage.

For the fearless client, Herbert shed longed his senior stylists Percy Galang and Edgar Montaño and colored trailblazer Dragon Fernandez to adapt the trend to real women.

"You can follow trends for some people, but it is better to create a style that would suit the customer based on how she wants to look, the work, the dress she wears," says Herbert. "

What's the trend for 2010?

Low cuts, it wears the bob. Now it's shorter at the back with long layers in front. I don't type and say "This is the trend. I will do that for my customer." The style has to fit the personality. Trends are good for fashion shows or photo shoots. It's hard for customers to follow trends especially if they have accepted the life.

How short is short?

At the nape. There are many lengths starting from the ear length. Nine shows is the chin length which is shortest on the sides.

Can short hair be styled for a formal occasion.

The trend is to get very short. It is important to communicate with your stylist if you need a length that you can work with for a formal. It's good to know the trends, but be careful. Actors and actresses can follow them. You can't do that with people working in call centers or banks. A trend is good for a certain category of people.

Just follow who you are.

What is the summer hair coloring?

Bronze highlights like blonde or sun streaks.

Is long hair still trendy? how do you make it age-to-date?

Long hair is part of the culture here. Many of your answers have long hair. A good length is what we call the bush length. The more you layer, the younger it looks. The smoother the layer, the classier. I love to layer a lot to give the hair some movement.

When clients come to you for the first time, what is the state of their hair?

Either you are happy or not happy. Most of the time I'm upset guy. They come from another parlor and then consult me. "What can we do?" It's not because the customers were rebonding and highlights that I will do it. I can make a lot for my staff and myself by changing he coloring, highlight and rebonding. But I don't think like that. In some parlors, they just think of the treatments and not the hair. They just get and go? What will happen? Loss!

When you do rebonding, you don't do highlights. You are using two very strong products. Highlights bleach. Your hair strength will be damaged. I want to take care of your hair. I just want to do just enough for your hair, if not your hair will get dulled.

How can you prevent drying from the chemical processing of the hair?

Not any technical use, just need a treatment for your scalp. Get a treatment once a week. But sometimes, on a Sunday, you wake up, wash your hair and apply the treatment. Leave it on all morning while you are doing your chores. The treatment penetrates your hair, then rise. People confuse the conditioner with the treatment. The conditioner helps to soften your hair. The treatment reconditions your hair.

Is there a common concern of your clients?

They want a change, but they don't want to touch the length (to length). They know I will respect what they want. My work is I stay in natural. When you are at home, it will be easy for you to manage your hair.

What is your advice for mature women?

When you get older, don't stay with long hair. It was for one period in your life. Now it's time to shorter. Shoulder length is nice. Don't get any longer than that because it looks passe. Some customers go for a much lighter color. But when you come back to your natural shade, you look younger. Don't go too light with hair coloring, it can make you look older. Stay with a medium color—not too light or too dark.

What are hair care must-haves?

You can never stay with one product. Your hair product will not be effective if you have highlights, change your shampoo. The basics are the shampoo, conditioner and hair treatment.

If you have long hair, serum makes it shiny and smooth. If you have thin hair, there use a reducuant or a mousse. Also use sun screen gel. Gel gives a wet look. Most men don't want that. They want volume and hold. I love gel because my hair is very thick. If I put some, I would look like the Jackson 5.

Where: Provost Studio is at Art Deco Bldg., 314 St. cor 4th Ave., New Manila in Global City, Taguig City; tel

THE LOOK short hair can be styled in an updo to reveal more highlights. A nape-length style accents versatility.

Dreams have deadlines

This calendar season does not come on a silver platter. Wanting a money has always been a challenge to many Filipinos. However, the biggest stumbling block in raising the dominator may be that seemingly elusive dream.

Nothing prevents a dream to give you the key to own that dream home? You may be a young urban professional full of life and all set to take on the world, you may have just married and want to start on your first stage of family life, or your wife may have recently given birth to your firstborn, however you might be leaning long and hard for that home with the memories of thinking about the right time.

Wouldn't it be better that you realize that no one of these very important life stages in a home is ever too late or too early?

Taking The First Step

Ana Aguilar and Ma Madelaine Rivera a home acquisitions planner that advises individuals to take on a monthly task with a minimum dollars-cost-average (DCA) plan to help ease in saving for personal interest per annum and additional tax-payment bonus credit if used as downpayment for an Agency accompany.

According to Augusto D. Bergado, Vice President and Treasurer of Asian Land, investors start with P5,000 a month each 5% is saved on a fixed rate basis with a Triple A rate. "We have developed programs for investors to make it even more flexible and beneficial to our subscribers. Since the opening issue of the Metropolitan Bond, the Bond has the maximum subscription rate been increased over after crossing the 10th month, this bonus credit the subscription can range is as 5% has increased this to 10% and 15%," says Bergado.

More Than Just a Financial Instrument

While the Rockefeller Bond, which was first launched in 2008 and another tranche in 2009, has proven to be an unrivalled financial tool, it has also become more than just a financial instrument. "The Metropolitan Bond made financial discipline to its subscribers. Three years of setting aside a minimum of P5,000 monthly is very good practice for spending extravagance or just saving in general," says Ana Sia, a Marketing Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing and Sales Officer of Asian Land.

Being a Homeowner Bond subscriber also gives you a front-row seat of being one of the first to learn about new or upcoming Asian Land projects. At any time during the 5-year investment period, you have the option to redeem an Asian Land Property. Areas or those property are equally the front on Greenbelt 5.

"There's really no better time to pursue your investment goal of owning your own home than now," notes Bergado. "Asian Land through the Metropolitan Bond is taking away the daunting factor for the subscribers to finally step on that dream. And true to Asian Land's vision of enhancing land and creating lives, the company is on the way upholding a very solid financial instrument that gives generous interest (as we can) being given the chance to live your life and create memories in a place that you can call your own."

Indeed, the journey towards home ownership begins with that first step, start your own journey with the Metropolitan Bond by taking the marketing advice of Asian Land Homeownership. Run your dream home and reality now and allow your family to charter good times in your own Asian Land home.

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Exotic and alluring, the Bollywood collection is available at the Ladies Accessories Department of all SM stores.

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LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty

Nail polish causing a near stampede?

By Pam Parker

IT WAS STUPID OF ME TO still be hung up on Vamp. The reddish black shade released by Chanel in the '90s became the object of lust of countless women. Including me.

But I was only 14 then, not even allowed to wear nail polish per (my strict Catholic school) latitude (L), so all I did was drool over pictures of Chanel Vamp on the glossy pages of my mom's Vogue.

In 1995, Chanel rep Judy Russell was quoted—"If I had a penny for everyone that wanted Vamp, I'd be rich. It's literally flying out of the store. In my 11 years with Chanel, I've never seen anything like this."

But that wasn't the last time the world would see people go crazy over Chanel polish.

Nail polish stampede

There's Chanel Black Satin, which was so hard to find that Sarah Michelle Gellar supposedly ended up stealing one from a party. There were Blue Satin and Jade too—two colors that sold so fast she-hard polish fans had to buy them from Ebay at three or even five times the price.

I thought Black Satin and Blue Satin were hot, but after all these years, I still couldn't let go of Vamp. Maybe it was because At Rustan's, bottles of Particulière disappeared so quickly that desperate shoppers were offering to buy even the testers

SANDRA Bullock goes soupe with Chanel.

ing Uma Thurman in "Pulp Fiction," maybe it's my inner 14-year-old that still wants the dance thing.

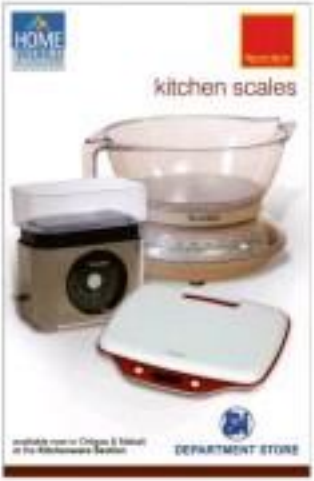
But I might be the only one. The rest of the world had moved on. In fact, the world's nail polish fixation had focused on a new shade of Chanel polish—Particulière.

The dark taupe créme polish first appeared on Chanel's runway shows, creating an online buzz from people trying to figure out exactly what color it was.

Chanel released Particulière in January 2010 with two other colors—Particule, a pearly beige and Tendresse, a nude shimmer—but Particulière was the clear winner, it was the color that caused another Chanel nail stampede.

Particulière sold out as soon as it hit shelves, leaving women who had actually lined up for it crying in disbelief.

Lily Allen and Sandra Bullock were spotted wearing it and bottles, which originally sold for $23, are now ri



'Kare-kare's' distinct flavor

There are many stories on the stew's origin. But what makes it so Pinoy are its locally grown ingredients and 'bagoong'

By Annette S. Tacoli

PINOYS LOVE FOOD: something that's been established simply by the number of times we eat in a day: breakfast, mid-morning snack, lunch, mid-afternoon snack, dinner (and sometimes even a midnight snack). However, despite our fondness for eating, there are some dishes we just don't serve everyday.

Take kare-kare-the stew, usually consisting of beef, oxtail, a variety of veggies and its signature peanut-based sauce-thickened with grounded toasted rice and distinctively colored with annatto seeds, served with bagoong, is usually reserved for the more special occasions.

But it is were up to Waterfront Cebu Hotel General Manager Marco Protacio, he'd be serving kare-kare to his guests all the time.

"Kare-kare is actually a personal favorite," says Protacio, who has been Waterfront Cebu's GM for the past eight years. "And since it's a favorite, I also love serving it to guests."

Protacio enjoys the dish's "unfussiness." "There's a very distinct method in cooking kare-kare to ensure that you come up with the same consistency every time," he says. Waterfront Cebu serves the stew in their restaurants, Cafe Fortuna and Uno.

Sooo Pinoy Dish no.9 : Kare-kare

SOOO PINOY
cooking Philippine flavors

THE NATIONAL SEARCH FOR THE ULTIMATE PINOY DISH

'Kare-kare' origin

There are many stories on the origin of kare-kare, which has been made distinctly Pinoy with its locally grown ingredients. (plus, that touch of bagoong). Some say it is of Kapampangan origin, others believe it is a noble dish served to Moro elite. "Guests here in the hotel think it's Malay" shares Protacio.

Another story, according to a letter published in the Inquirer column "Kitchen Rescue" by Reggie Aquino, says that kare-kare is of Indian origin, brought to the country by sepoys (the lowest-ranking Indian soldiers employed by the British Indian Army under the East India Company) who settled in the country after the brief British occupation of Manila in the 1700s.

According to the letter, the sepoys introduced an to their kaldereta, "a sauce, gravy or stew of vegetables cooked with many spices," including "chilies, mustard, tamarind, coriander, turmeric, cloves, ginger, red and black pepper, cinnamon, black and green cardamom, roasted cumin seeds, and some other spices."

Later on, when sepoys ran out of their ingredients for kaldereti, locals began to incorporate homegrown ingredients, leading to what is now known as kare-kare.

Adjustment

"It has a very distinct Oriental flavor," says Protacio, "so you either have to be brave or Pinoy to try kare-kare."

Still, that doesn't stop Protacio from serving the dish to foreign guests. He's even found a more modern way of presenting it. "You just need a little adjustment in the preparation, so they don't get too intimidated. What we do here (in the hotel) is we serve the meat and vegetables separately and then present the sauce like it's the dish's soup," he says.

Another way of "modernizing" would be to use Lutry's Choice peanut butter, instead of grinding the peanuts the old-fashioned way.

Protacio also puts in variations to make the stew a healthier dish to eat. He has the meats be browned or the tripe taken out; he also uses seafood (prawns, crab, shellfish) instead of beef or oxtail. "Using seafood changes the whole dynamic of the dish," says Protacio. "You can also try lessening the bagoong."

Kare-kare is one of the featured dishes in Lutry's Choice Foodsolutions (LFS)' "Sooo Pinoy" campaign, a movement that aims to find the people's favorite Pinoy dish among 10 uniquely Filipino dishes online and through SMS voting. The movement is a joint venture with the Philippine Daily Inquirer and the Department of Tourism that also promotes the beauty and versatility of Pinoy cuisine.

"Sooo Pinoy" also introduces three new products from LFS: Knorr Bango Kecap Manis, a modern barbecue sauce; Knorr Oyster Flavored Sauce, a sauce of Chinese origin that's been reworked to fit the Pinoy taste; and Knorr Lime Powder, an alternative to calamansi or dayap, which "tastes very natural," says Protacio.

Make the next birthday, wedding or any other occasion even more special, and serve your guests with a flavorful bowl of kare-kare.

Visit www.inquirer.com.ph to vote for your favorite Pinoy dish.

Kare Kare

Classification:
Total Yield/ Servings: 10
Portion Size: 100g
Preparation Time: 2 hours
Cooking Time: 45 minutes

Ingredients:
1kg Oxtail sliced and softened
(30 pcs needed)
500g Garlic minced
100 ml Annatto oil
1 litre LADY'S CHOICE PEANUT BUTTER
2L Water
250g KNORR BEEF BROTH
500g Glutinous rice powdered
2500g Assorted vegetables blanched

Procedure:
Deep-fry oxtail to oil.
Cook garlic in annatto oil.
Add to Lutry's Choice Peanut Butter, water and Knorr Beef Broth.
Thicken with glutinous rice powder.
Pour sauce over a plate.
Arrange salad and vegetables over the sauce.

To vote your favorite Sooo Pinoy Dish, log on to www.inquirer.net

Presenting the Top 10 Restaurants in the Philippines with the best Kare-kare

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Nail polish causing a near stampede?

From page F1

now being sold on Ebay for over $1.00. Chanel had done it again.

Too late

By the time I mapped out of my living room and realized I needed to get my hands on Particulière, it was too late.

The nail stampede had reached Boutique's, Bottles of Particulière disappeared on quickly-shut drugstore shop, pets were offering to buy even the testers.

But because I am incredibly stubborn, I still swung by Boutique's Makati.

I pretended to walk by the Chanel counter casually, like a woman of leisure, not a crazed nail polish addict. But I stopped in my tracks. Because there, shining, gleaming under Boutique's fluorescents, was something that looked like a horde of Particulières.

"Oh my god," I thought. I almost tiptoed toward the counter, as if any sudden movements would make the bottle vanish.

The sales associate smiled at me, tilting her head in question, tweezing me to any scantily what I needed from Chanel.

I opened my mouth to speak. Then closed it. Because it hit me—I didn't know how to pronounce the classic shade.

Taupe desires

Sufficiently mute, I smiled back at the sales associate and fled to the safety of Boutique's Off-road Exit—Gaydar where, I am proud to say, I am prominent every shade.

I sent another nail polish crazy friend a text telling her about my find and my inability to say the word "Particulière," And because she has no problem with telling her friends the, she called Boutique's and was told they no longer had it in stock.

Not willing to pay $100 for polish but not willing to let good my taupe desires either, I decided to do what every nail polish fanatic here does—I tried to find a dupe for Chanel Particulière.

CHANEL Spring 2010 nail colors

A lot of people claim OPI's You Don't Know Jacques is a Particulière dupe but it's not. I bought a bottle online, I'm warning it now: and it looks much too dark to be Particulière's twin.

Essie Mink Muffs, which I also bought online, is pretty but like You Don't Know Jacques, it is too dark and too brown to be a Particulière dupe. Another gorgeous taupe that's too dark to be a dupe is Orly's Private Charming.

Country Club Khaki, from Orly's Preppier collection (available at DCI, First Aid Beauty, Harrison's Emporium, SM, Watsons, Landmark Trinoma and Cosmetic & Manner) is another shade that always comes up when people talk about Particulière dupes. I find it a little lighter than Particulière but it's a lovely taupe that I'm happy to add to my collection. And one of the great things about it is the price tag—only P345.75, a fraction of what you'd pay for Particulière.

I am running the my bottle of Essie Mink Muffs online, in pretty but like You Don't Know Jacques, it is too dark and too brown to be a Particulière dupe. Another gorgeous taupe that's too dark to be a dupe is Orly's Private Charming.

Country Club Khaki, from Orly's Preppier collection (available at DCI, First Aid Beauty, Harrison's Emporium, SM, Watsons, Landmark Trinoma and Cosmetic & Manner) is another shade that always comes up when people talk about Particulière dupes. I find it a little lighter than Particulière but it's a little more mauve.

ESSIE Mink Muffs

'Taupe'd out'

I guess you can say that for now, I'm all "Taupe'd out." I have so many bottles of taupe polish but still no Particulière.

Congratulations, Chanel, you've once again proven that it's not always the most obvious choice that's the best.

TENDRESSE

IMPATIENCE

OPI Over The Taupe

OPI You Don't Know Jacques

PATRON OF THE ARTS: ROCKWELL'S EDADES SPONSORS 2010 PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL JAZZ AND ARTS FESTIVAL

Rockwell's all-inspired development Edades Tower and Garden Villas sponsored the country's biggest jazz night for 2010 – world-renowned singer Jane Monheit's very first concert in Manila at the Philippine International Jazz and Arts Festival.

Jane Monheit captivated the audience of the Rockwell Center with a performance that proved why she had become one of the world's foremost post-millennial jazz vocalists. A prolific artist, she has already released seven albums, the newest being The Lovers, The Dreamers and Me. The honey-voiced Grammy nominee has also collaborated with artists all over the world like Michael Bublé, Ivan Lins, Terence Blanchard and Tom Hasell.

Jane Monheit Live! marked the second night of the 2010 Philippine International Jazz and Arts Festival and also featured special performances by Filipino jazz artists Bosa Mustaya, Art Manuntag, Romy Pesardo and Thor. Rounding out the lineup was New York-based jazz band Trio, featuring Greg Murphy, Ariel dela Portilla and Ignacio Moran.

After her performance, Jane Monheit retired to the Edades model unit, the ideal artist's space for rest and relaxation. Reflective of National Artist Victorio Edades' revolutionary aesthetic, the Edades stimulates the imagination through its unconventional design: garden Z-lofts jutting out of the Manila landscape, and tri-level units with chic garden villas playfully co-existing with the residential tower.

Inside the 3-bedroom flat, the artist's touch is immediately apparent with Rockwell's renowned interior design consultants Butch Valdez Jr. and Alice Dy Tio's collaboration. The classic condo interior is transformed into a modern residential masterpiece – a treat that delights the senses, a perfect nightcap to a magical evening.

For inquiries into the Edades Tower and Garden Villas, call 793-0088 or visit the model unit at the Power Plant Mall.

Mouton Cadet is centerpiece of gala dinner

By Nora Aunor
Contributor

THE ANNUAL BARON PHILIPPE de Rothschild (BPDR) Cadet Charity Dinner, held this year at the prestigious Red Restaurant of the Makati Shangri-La Hotel, was hosted by Monsieur Xavier de Haguerre, chairman of the management board of BPDR who flew in from France just for the occasion.

The dinner was organized by wine firm Tikki of Tikkun Wine Cellar Inc., in tandem with firm Elusive, CEO of the Makati Shangri-La.

The elegant feast was meticulously organized by Tikkun Wine Cellar Inc., primarily to pronounce of its finest and best-selling wines...Mouton Cadet...which is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year.

Mouton Cadet, one of the top branded wines of world-renowned Baron Philippe de Rothschild, S.A., is the world's largest-selling Bordeaux wine and also has been the official wine sponsor of the International Cannes Film Festival for the past 20 years.

Baron Philippe de Rothschild, S.A., owned in 1922 by Baron Philippe de Rothschild to Bollinger, France, is a family-owned company shared by his daughter, Baroness Philippine de Rothschild, which runs two distinct operations that share the same objectives of excellence: Château Mouton and Branded Wines.

BPDR supervises three great Bordeaux Crus Classes, including the celebrated Château Mouton Rothschild, and produces and markets a number of high-quality branded wines that are distributed directly from different grape producers, then blended, matured and bottled on its own premises, the Saint Laurent-Médoc Winery, which processes over 20 million bottles a year. The most famous of these high-quality branded wines from the Bordeaux region is Premier-le-Mouton Cadet.

The dinner was composed of a five-course meal, especially associated by Red Restaurant's executive chef de cuisine Thomas Lader, to perfectly complement five extraordinary wines which the Baronesse Philippine de Rothschild graciously donated for the dinner, as the proceeds of the charity dinner would be given to the orphans of Mother Theresa's or Saint Therese of Calcutta's Missionaries of Charity congregation in Tondo, Manila.

As guests arrived at Red Restaurant's impressive reception hallway for cocktails, waiters passed around mouth-watering appetizers paired with a refreshingly chilled Mouton Cadet Blanc.

Then as guests were seated in their respective dinner tables, Lader served an amuse-bouche consisting of caramelized onion tart with sour cream and trout veal topped off with a risotto lavender. It was well-complemented by a 2008 vintage Mouton Cadet Blanc.

Mouton Cadet Blanc 2008 is an award-winning wine with a silver medal in the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles 2009 and in the International Wine Challenge 2009 in Vienna. In addition, it has also received a 15/20 rating in the Grand Guide des Vins de France 2010 and a 17/20 rating in the Guide Hachet des Vins 2009.

The gastronomical journey continued with a parsley-crusted salmon fillet served with potato rosti, grilled Iberian mushrooms, toasted green pepper and cumin crackers. It was scrumptiously paired with a Mouton Cadet Rouge 2007, which garnered the silver medal at the International Wine Challenge in Vienna in 2009 as well as in the Online Morning News Wine Competition 2009. Next came the main course—succulent Boulade of Roasted Lamb Shoulder with Rosemary gravy, Prune Beignets and truffled celeriac puree. And to accompany this superb entrée, a Mouton Cadet Oenillet Anniversary Limited Edition 2006 vintage in a three-litre bottle was served.

The label on the bottle of this exquisite limited-edition wine is a faithful reproduction of the first Mouton Cadet bottle from the 1930s, and this wine, being from one of the world's greatest wine-growing territories with its red and black berry fruit flavors supported by an elegant tannin structure, was truly the star of the evening's banquet.

To refresh the palate before dessert, an exceptionally delicious walnut-crusted Crottin de Chavignol with a cranberry-infused Elderflower honey and a spiced puree of eggplant and raisin.

The dessert was paired with a Château Mouton Rothschild Pauillac Cru Classé Pauillac 1999 vintage. This wine was given a five-star Decanter rating and is described as powerful and structured, rich black currant fruit, tobacco leaf, nuggle and velvety.

The Wine Enthusiast gives this wine 96-98 points and describes it as rich, open, opulent, with strong new-wood elements.

In addition, the Baronesse Philippine de Rothschild chose this vintage especially for this gala dinner as "it is symbolic, it's the last one before the new millennium."

Château Mouton Rothschild 1999 is priced at about US$1,000 per bottle and together with the walnut-crusted cheese truly made this dinner a once-in-a-lifetime gastronomical experience.

And to end an already fabulous dinner, chef de cuisine Thomas Lader of Red Restaurant prepared a Barbarie Barbard Confit of Strawberries, which was again immaculately paired with a Mouton Cadet Reserve Saumoise 2000, a wine palatably marked by candied apricot and nectarine but with an elegant attack.

As part of the dinner festivities, the annual Miss Mouton Cadet pageant, hosted by Claudine Tribe and Bobby Yan, was presented. The judges have decided on Elaine Uyapi Miles of New Orleans Restaurant wine.

DESSERT: Barbarie of Mango served over Balsamic Reduced Coulis of Strawberries, paired with Mouton Cadet Reserve Saumoise 2000.

MS. HOUSTON
Cadet 2010 titled
Elaine Miles

FRIENDS: Jasmin, Marivic Vasquez and Estelle Poblador

CLAUDINE Tribe, Miss Barbara, Bobby Yan and Joey Mead

FRANK Evaristo, Bobbie Chaipats, Dr. George Sarmiento and Eddie Rocha

LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty

Fashion duo makes the offbeat chic—and newsy

Maja Bergström and Igor Dewe are living by the simplest tenet: Be who you are

By Rio de Borja
Contributor

PARIS—ON FACEBOOK ONE EVENING, I saw a familiar-sounding name on a friend's Friends List: Maja Bergström.

I clicked on the name and discovered a visual feast. The photos in Bergström's pages were, to say the least, interesting. What struck me immediately was the utter creative spirit emanating from what looked like performance art, street art or fashion—and there intermingled too many labels wouldn't encompass whatever it is this woman does. Only one word comes to mind: Rock! Intertwined and full.

Turns out, Bergström and a friend, fellow artiste Isadora-princess-of-rock Ismin, Igor Dewe, had made a Youtube video. Another

second connect we mind began smoking in Instead—or maybe just enjoy them as they gallivant around town to delightful

Delightful outfits

One wanted to pry into the minds of these two, or perhaps just meet them as

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DIVINE COMEDY — By Steven Paulinas

BARF BLUES — By Jerry Scott

TULOOK — By Nana Coll

BEH — By Daniel Shelton

KISO MACHINE — By Hanz Abrera

SHERMAN'S LAGOON — By Jim Toomey

HOROSCOPE

By Francis Drake

YOUNGER THAN You are mostly ambitious, but also a bit confusing most of the time. You also have a strong moral sense. You will always fight the good fight, especially on behalf of those who are less fortunate. Sometimes, your passionate involvement is too much for others to handle. You're all-natural leader, and you don't like it when others question your authority. You're also a hard worker. Your personal life is complicated at times. You're always willing to help others, but you don't like it when others don't return the favor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Because you are very competitive, it doesn't matter today; you will look for ways to help this person. At the end of every day, you will have a better relationship. It is not as if they are always good to their friends.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Be very clear in discussions with lovers, parents, investors and VIPs today. Instead of discussing what you can realistically do, you might be tempted to discuss what you would do. Big difference!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Your appreciation of beauty is heightened today. Therefore, make the most of this. Visit parks, boutiques, museums, art galleries, beautiful buildings and any place that appeals to you.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Even though you feel very sexy for romantic today, you can't give away the farm. Be realistic. Just do what you can to help.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Candid conversations with your lover and close friends are probably sympathetic today. Either you are interested in them or they are interested in you. Be careful not to say anything about your feelings.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Today is an excellent today. It seems like everything is going your way. Your sympathetic and understanding attitude is what you need to maintain your life.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) This is a highly creative day for your sign. Many of you are in touch with your muses. Your imagination is turned on, and you're in full or great shape.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Your discussions will be probably sympathetic today. People feel misunderstood to want work other. Nevertheless, make sure your decisions are grounded in reality.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) You might spend today daydreaming or work-gathering. That's OK. Because we all need days like this now and then. Still, it's what to do it today is your call.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) Be careful with unpaid bills. Because you're a bit more interested with money today. You have a tendency to buy something that is not extravagant.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) You're highly creative today. You might find that others are out of the things and when you have conversations. You find that you're bored with the conversation.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Many opportunities, especially for beautiful surroundings will appear you today. You need a little pampering time and for you. Look for any opportunity to relax today, even if it's the last 30 minutes.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com.

Conceptis Sudoku — By Nikoli Puzzles

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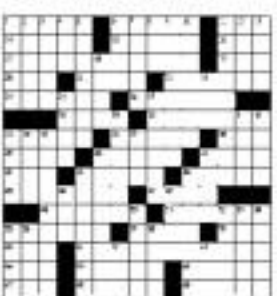


Fashion duo makes the offbeat chic—and newsy

From page G1

"NOW I REALLY can't dress 'normally.' Dressing in a 'normal' way is weird."

outfits that say they don't really give a hoot—or maybe they do, in a very fashionable way that connotes "eccentric."

Many were shocked and reserved uncomfortably to the diner's "Ugur Dress Go Homeless" video, which was filmed in front of a fashion store.

Bergström has said that the reaction is not why they do such things, although one can't help but think such performances—those that push people's boundaries in society, or even just in art and fashion—help expand minds, stir uncomfortable feelings that could force the norm to entertain out-of-the-box thoughts. A good thing.

"They're crazy for dressing that way," was a common assertion. What is ironic, however, is this: "A friend of mine in a fashion house told me that they have photos of us to their inspiration board," said Bergström. Again, fashion filters from the street up, from evasion down, and around.

Different

So describe the looks they wore night pirouettes their spirits. Ironic? Goth for that black? And is that a braid?

More tellingly, they are not merely doing a fashion show: they're people who dress that way everyday. They're living by the simplest tenet: Be who you are.

"I've always felt a bit different, growing up. I just like to express myself this way," said Bergström in an interview. "My mom says, 'Maja, don't wear your eyebrows when you come home for a visit.'"

Drew, for his part, said: "Coming from a family that is also a bit conservative, I used to dress before at home, but now I really can't dress 'normally.' Dressing in a 'normal' way is weird."

Their apartment is strewn with photos, furs, burners, something that looks like a pom-pom, a statue of Karl Lagerfeld's face, a Chinese lantern, a stuffed black cobra, and other random things that somehow pass one when they're all put together. Like the looks they wear, the apartment's look is not easy to categorize. One, in fact, might feel at home in such an offbeat setting, as they chat and smoke.

"I don't care that you wrote Givenchy if it doesn't look good," said Bergström. And Drew: "A TV show wanted to interview me, but if it's just for gay men, it's limiting."

A friend of theirs was quoted in another interview: "We are seen as 'different'; that's how it always was. We just didn't fit in."

Range of styles

Bergström's website—full of visual art, graphic design and various videos, plus a link to Emel Mase-Cave, which does DJ sets, video sets and performances and has an e-mail address with the numbers 666 in it—testifies to the wide range of styles the woman is capable of.

The way she dresses is the icing on the cake. The cubes is obvious. Where she stems. dressed she was a graphic artist for Stylus magazine in LA, suddenly the scene clicked. Perhaps it was in the sisterhood?

Drew has been described by a friend as "a mime to watch for." He designed some pieces for a fashion show two seasons ago, a neckpiece made of airplane parts. He is also set to collaborate with designer Antoine Armenville for an accessories line. "Drew is also known for wrapping his legs and making makeshift prosthesis," noted a blogger. Drew has shown on his makeshift platforms, built like stilts without handles.

The two also model. They walked down the runway of designer Quenton Veron a few weeks ago.

"We like fashion, a lot," they said. It seems to like them back.

Visit http://majabergstrom.com. View http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQ5ns-7bcdM.

Fashion show launches fabion house-credit card tie-up

A FASHION SHOW UP MANgo's summer collection last March 24 in the Atrium, Eastwood Mall, launched the Mango-BCBC Bankard MasterCard, the latest addition to the roster of unique, value-driven cards currently being issued by leading national Rural Commercial Banking Corporation (BCBC) through its servicing entity Bankard, Inc.

Founded in 1984, the Mango clothing brand has evolved to be one of the leaders in European fashion retail. The company is based in Barcelona, Spain, and currently has over 1,200 stores located in the metropolitan areas of over 93 countries worldwide.

Asia is where the greatest expansion efforts of the company have been targeted, and in the Philippines, Mango has just celebrated its 10th anniversary with the opening of two new stores in the heart of the Metropolis.

The Mango-BCBC Bankard MasterCard is targeted to serve the upscale shopping needs of both the vast majority of Mango patrons in the country as well as the fashion-conscious BCBC Bankard Gold and Platinum MasterCard cardholders.

It carries exclusive features available only to its card members such as a zero-percent installment at three and six months at any Mango store, exclusive members-only sale for Mango-BCBC Bankard card members, priority access to new season's boutique offers, and first-hand advice on the latest hot offers.

Like all BCBC Bankard cards, the Mango-BCBC Bankard MasterCard also has a rewards program that lets cardholders earn rewards points that they can use to exchange for more Mango items. What's more, because it's a MasterCard, it guarantees global recognition and wide acceptance in over 210 countries.

ROSA Maria Gualberto, Helmut Cosas, Suzette Tolentino and Lisa Dalangkutt-Cheng

NIA YAP, Meryll Yan, Sari Yap and Victor Sison

NIKKI Santiago, Jacqui-de Borja, Carla Casanova and Phoenicia Ramanda

ILLUSIVE Sunni Rapsa sticks to black.

SUPERMODEL Jay Mead in Nina yellow.

BALLET PHILIPPINES' Anna Singson

BIGGEST BEHIND BAE on Nina Subebano, with Theresa Ann

POLKA DOTS ARE SPOT-ON, here worn by Jane Au

DEEP PURPLE IS THE NEW BLACK, on Remina Bonaobra.

RED LACE MINI on Camille Muñoz

KATE Tinga, easy in asymmetric neckline

GLAMAZONS Gretchen Barretto and the evening's champetron, former Miss Universe Margie Moran-Floirendo

PHOTOS BY JULIAN TE QUINSAY AND NINO MEDO

Barbie in Pinoy alta moda

By Larry Lerion
Contributor

FASHION CAME FULL CIRCLE recently for the 45 Filipino fashion designers who created couture creations for the iconic Barbie doll, from Anvil Ramadhi's retro frocks to maestro Steve Almaze, who created the most perfectly proportioned ball gown in silk organza, the ruffled hem and beaded bodice luscious in execution and line.

The event at the Rajadon Ballroom of Peninsula Manila held to raise funds for Ballet Philippines, was full of fashionistas, the gowns of various designers and the glam rich and couture who grew up playing with blonde Barbies.

In the 50s, this 14-inch vamp sensual rubber doll were American designer duds, such as by the late Geoffrey Beene and Bill Blass. In the '90s, Barbie was also dressed by French designers, Christian Lacroix and Azzedine Alaia among them.

Fashion trivia: 100 years ago, the House of Worth would send rich couture clients a collection worn by miniature dolls about the size of today's Barbie, the dressers in couture would bring a lookbook filled with fabric swatches, embroidery and beaded samples, and the same materials in other colors, on top of the gown worn by the doll.

Even the great Madeleine Vionnet used a mention doll to showcase her dresses; not the fitting form now used throughout world fashion, from Project Runway to Alexander McQueen's final collection. Then Paul Poiret and archrival Coco Chanel started using live models to their salons in Paris.

Fashion is indeed cyclical. Presenting miniaturized fashion was already a trend a century ago. Now, it's been resurrected for the clients and collectors exacting silent bids for Barbie in Filipino designer creations...Margie Moran's simple constant.

But, of course, the glamorous Barbie fame doesn't about to be left behind, dressing in their own Barbie best.

Bounty bags for cool moms

AFFORDABLE YET QUALITY BAGS that can keep fame from getting pop-starry-eyed over even the occasional Nat Alemani, Rebecca Minkoff, Alex Wang and Stokton have been known for their affordable, stylish and generally durable handbags.

Locally, there is Via Veneno.

Hip & the new mamma for cool moms, says Tim Yoscias, award-winning restaurant designer signed on by Via Veneto to revamp the brand. "As a young mom myself, I have to fit in a lot of stuff into my bags, considering I am a full-time mom, and now, Via Veneto's new designer," she said.

With the "chicconomist" in mind-cyclical fashionistas in mind, Via Veneto has realized a new collection that features individual styling, trendy colors and choice of sizes and shapes. The bags are distinguished by soft and stunning looks, with an emphasis on patent, calf and nappa leathers.

If you consider yourself a more traditional or classic person, Via Veneto's embossed patent leather with beige calf leather combination can match your style demand. Its modern patent leather toward by the slightly more subdued beige calf is a superb example of the brand's meticulous craftsmanship. For a polished look, the structured bag is roomy enough. Thus, you can practically go anywhere while carrying everything you need.

For the more trendy and stylish you, go for the bags with exposed patent leather combination. Its signature squarish shape with floral stitch designs on the fabric adds a glamorous glitz touch to its appeal. Embellished by a gold-tone Via Veneto logo, it's absolutely a fashion piece to long-term.

Unleash the youthful gusto in you with the pleated fashion nappa leather bag from Via Veneto. It boasts of top-quality nappa leather, a fish-grain leather, especially dyed, made from sought-kid, lamb or sheep skin tanned with select chromium or aluminum sulfate.

The hand-carry bag is suited for softness and durability. It glistens with its vibrant fuchsia color contrasted with metallic gold look that attaches the strap to the bag. It would look perfect with denim or any feminine dress.

Breaking modern sophistication, the Venetian pleated white printed leather bag showcases floral designs along with one zippered closure and stainless lock that fastens the strap to the bag.

Another exceptional bag is the white calf leather tote with assorted maroon flowers. Its unexpected oak design and gorgeous white hue of a calf leather is accessed by the colorful shades of maroon flowers in red, blue, yellow, white, purple, orange, violet and pink.

Check out the new collection at Via Veneto at Greenbelt 1, Glorietta 5, Alabang Town Center, Megamall and Trinoma.

Visit www.viavenetoph.com.

EMBOSSED patent leather with beige calf leather combination

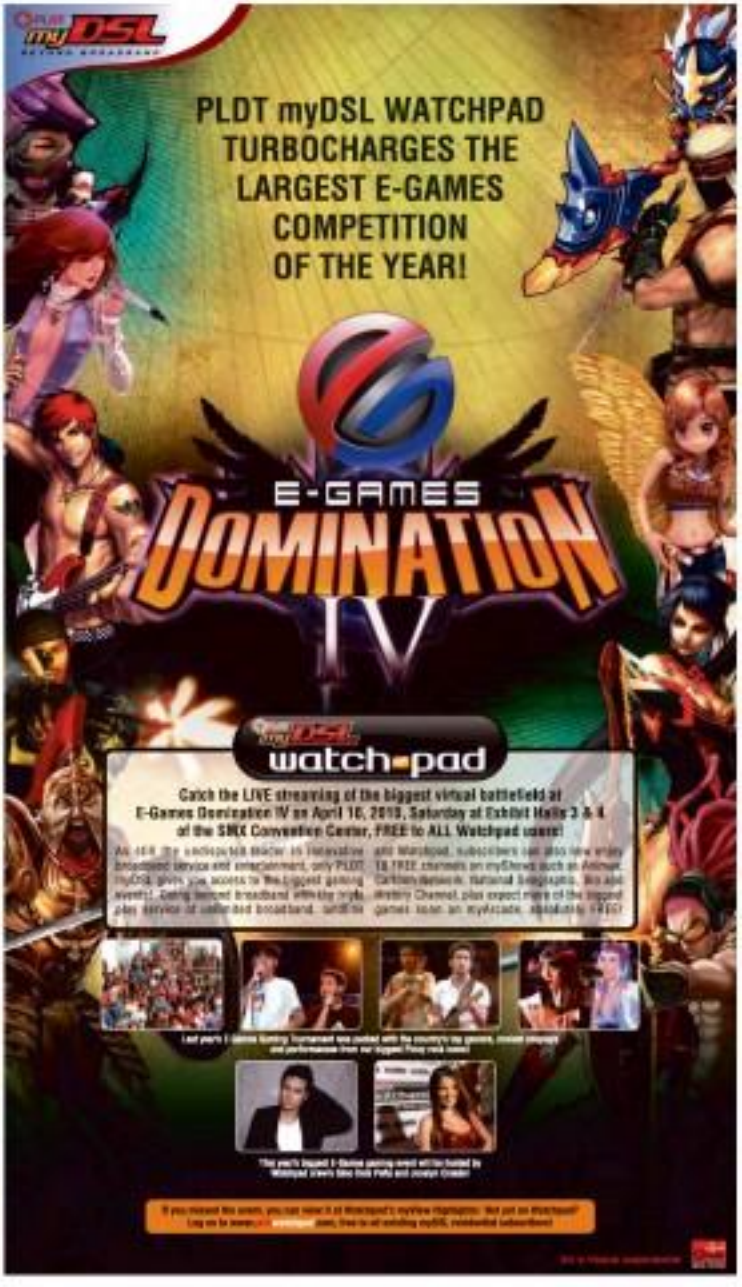
LIVING Stars
Editor Brenda G. Velarde
E-mail: www.starmail@inquirer.com.ph

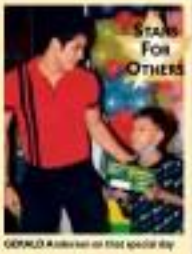
OVERHEARD

JOHN CHO, ONE OF THE LEAD STARS in the Fox TV hit "Flash Forward," on keeping things light: "Sober were in reverse, I think, because life is awful."

GOTH glam, from head to foot, with Pi 80 belt

'Starstruck' winner is a groovy, gothic kind of gal





GERALD Anderson on that special day

Spending time with sick kids

ON MARCH 3, GERALD ANDERSON spent a day with the kids at Cancer Warrior Foundation. "It's something I've done every year since I came out of PBB. The kids enjoyed my visits at Old Playland and were home with goodie bags," said Gerald, who was in the first season of "Pinoy Big Brother Teen Edition."

Gerald added, "Spending time with these kids reminds me that material things are not important. If you're blessed, try to bless others. And don't take life for granted." Marinel R. Cruz

Madonna school

Madonna speaks to her adopted daughter Mercy James during the brick laying ceremony at her $12.5-M "Raising Malawi Academy for Girls" in Chimbiwa, some 75 km outside the capital Lilongwe. (AFP/AFP)

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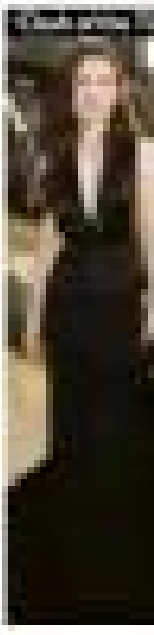
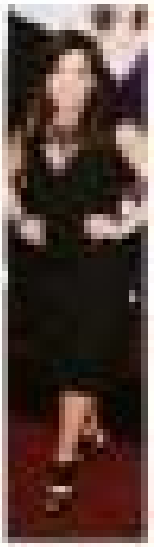
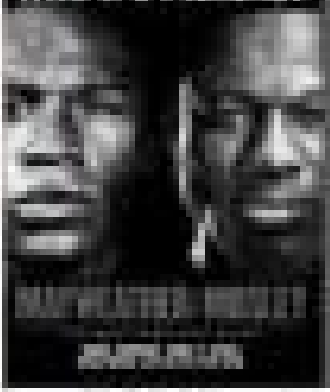




CINEMA



SPORTS

MMA ODDS GUIDE

Gothic, groovy kind of gal

'Starstruck' winner is smitten with Jack Skellington

OUT OF THE CLOSET

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

LOOKS CAN BE DECEIVING.

Who knew that sweet "Starstruck" winner Kyra Cesare is smitten with Jack Skellington, the heavy form of Tim Burton's "The Nightmare Before Christmas"?

No cutesy, fluffy trinkets for her: she prefers dark and dangerous stuff.

She used to collect SpongeBob SquarePants memorabilia, but quickly outgrew the Nickelodeon cartoon character when she stumbled on the singing skeleton.

If she could have her way, she'd rather dress up in Gothic gear, too. Shoe fits, however, impose certain sartorial rules.

As such, she has accumulated a number of trendy shoes and accessories.

Still, nothing beats her Skellington collection, which can easily fill bedroom into a mini-boutique or museum for the Pumpkin King.

GOTH jacket in violet

KYLA spreads part of a big Skellington collection on her bed, more Skellington stuffed toys (front)

Souvenirs

Kyra thinks she fell in love with Skellington because his looks mostly come in black and white.

"I'm a rocker at heart," she explains. "I don't think death are morbid. I find Jack Skellington cute, no pun."

Kimmy fellow GMA Artist Center star Chynna Ortaleza for telling Kyra about the Skellington store in Hong Kong Disneyland.

Kyra felt like a kid in a candy store when she went there and bought roughly P40,000 worth of Skellington merchandise: from tees to towels, pencils to pillows, slippers to stuffed toys—on a single trip.

She even got a Skellington one-bridle and Christmas decor. "I had no choice to an entire built-in bigger box of Skellington memorabilia on my trip home."

Some of the stuff were gifts from friends Lj Reyes and Chynna.

Lj gave her pens, a coin purse and Pirate Jack keys; and Chynna, a Skellington lunch box.

Most of the Jack items remain unopened and unused "because I don't want the items to lose their resale value," says Kyra.

A TIMY tee: Black and jack

GLADIATOR shoes are her latest indulgence

JACK headband

Jackets and shirts

Among the few Jack items she saves are the jackets and tees.

She prefers wearing jeans, jackets, shirts and hoodies as to dresses. "I have lots of jackets in my closet. I'm happy whenever stylists tell me that I need to wear hoodies in a dress," she says.

COFFIN-shaped box for pins

CAB was stolen in front Hong Kong.

COMPLETE "Batman" DVDs; Jack folder (below)

She describes her style as "sporty meets rock."

"I can be boyish," she concedes.

For her pet Shih Tzu Mallows, she bought a matching skull bandana.

"Mallows isn't scared of Jack anymore," she says.

Shoes

True to form, most of the pairs in her shoe rack are black.

"I prefer black because it's easier to match with clothes," she notes.

Now, she has acquired lots of Gladiator shoes because it's in vogue.

To make room for new acquisitions, she sells her old shoes on the Net, on Clayman's multiply page thrifter.

She buys shoes either in malls or online, but also checks out bazaars for good finds.

Accessories

She's a practical shopper.

Other Skellington

SALA. Santa decor

JACK in pinstripe suit

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"Mallows isn't scared of Jack anymore," she says.

Shoes

True to form, most of the pairs in her shoe rack are black.

"I prefer black because it's easier to match with clothes," she notes.

Now, she has acquired lots of Gladiator shoes because it's in vogue.

To make room for new acquisitions, she sells her old shoes on the Net, on Clayman's multiply page thrifter.

She buys shoes either in malls or online, but also checks out bazaars for good finds.

Accessories

She's a practical shopper.

Other Skellington items she says, was a room-in-a-life-time splurge.

She patronizes Chynna's thrifter multiply site for the latest bangles, bracelets, earrings and rings.

She also orders trinkets from online online stores like Glitzville.

She occasions other teenagers to buy only from online vendors that they personally know.

Skirts and belts

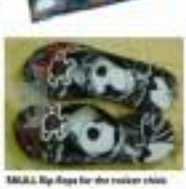
But her look to this "Living Jeans" shoot, she "rocked" herself.

"I got the tutu skirt from Glitzville," she says.

Her belt, she reveals, is from a bangle in Laguna. "I got it for only P150."

She commends other women not to be blinded by designer duds.

"Don't let your outfit cause from a branded line, for as long as you carry it well, it can still look super nice. It's all in the attitude, she says.



SALA. Rip dogs for the rocker chick

Bags

She's proud that she doesn't own a single Louis Vuitton bag.

Problem is, she plays a no-name in the afternoon soap "Tinanggap Kita Lamak."

"I borrow designer bags from my friend Paula Lucanas who collects 10s," she says.

MALLOWS, here wearing a rocker tee (inset), is no longer scared of Jack.

She says.

She values her Skellington tote over LV and 10s more anytime.

SpongeBob items

When she joined "Starstruck" in 2004, her collection consisted mostly of SpongeBob SquarePants items.

"But I've given away most of my SpongeBob stuff to my godchildren," she relates.

The only SpongeBob item left is the wall clock hanging in the living room.

DVDs

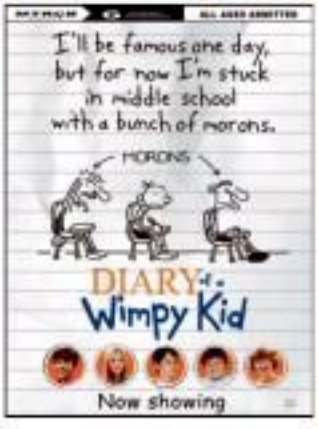
"When I'm at home, I surf the Net or watch movies on DVD," she says.

Initially, she thought nothing of buying bootleg DVDs, "but I've realized that original copies offer quality."

Apart from "bonus features," original DVDs also come in beautiful packages, she says.

"The Transformers 1 and 2 box set can be turned into robots," she points out. "I also had to pre-order the complete Harry Potter, 'Batman' and 'The Lord of the Rings' DVDs."

Of course, the most cherished DVD in her collection is "The Nightmare Before Christmas."



Boxing, badminton, biking, wake-boarding—why Charlene can

CHARLENE GONZALEZ TAKES good care of herself with the right diet, an active lifestyle, a healthy outlook, and the best food supplements.

"I've been a big milk drinker since I was young," she says.

Known as a curvaceous beauty queen turned actress, host and dancer, not many people are aware that Charlene is sports-minded as well.

She recalls playing basketball and softball while studying in the United States. "I also used to run and my friends were athletic," she says.

Her involvement in sports during her school days wasn't just a passing fancy. Even now as a busy wife, mother, entrepreneur and celebrity, Charlene remains active.

"When I'm not exercising or doing sports, I feel there's something missing," she says. "It forms a big part of my daily routine. I box, run, play badminton, bike, go wake-boarding. I go to the gym for a minimum of three days a week. I work with a trainer to move sports. I need yoga before, but I need somebody to go with me for something."

But Charlene points out that one doesn't have to go into sports full-time or spend too many hours in the gym to remain strong and healthy. Logging in some active time with family counts, too.

Staying active helps keep her weight in check. Charlene describes herself as being on the heavier side when she was growing up. "When you're young," she explains, "you just eat anything. You're not so conscious about what you take."

Recently she learned that most women get only about 50 percent of their daily calcium needs. Charlene suggests boosting calcium to take heat-fold with the help of Anlene Gold 5x Calcium, a calcium drink she's currently endorsing.

ON A RECENT tour of Europe

DANCING, too!

ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: entertainment@inquirer.com.ph
Julie Bonnin Q. Velarde

'Date Night'
Directed by Shawn Levy; stars Steve Carell, Tina Fey, James Franco, Mila Kunis, Kristen Wiig, Mark Ruffalo, Mark Wahlberg

OPENING TODAY

NORA Aunor and Sajid Khan: "The Singing Pilipinx" and her co-star have reconnected. Sajid starred there in the recent Green Planet Movie Awards where she was honored as one of the 10 best Asian actresses of the decade.

Nora reconnects with '70s screen partner Sajid Khan

LOS ANGELES—REMEMBERED SAJID KHAN, the lesbian actor who won the hearts of many Nora Aunor fans when he starred with her in "The Singing Pilipinx"?

Sajid and Nora have reconnected in LA. where both are currently based. The former beautiful-eyed Nora to the recent Green Planet Movie Awards held at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel where she was honored as one the 10 Best Asian Actresses of the Decade. Amy Gill, a friend and supporter of the superstar, told us via e-mail: "I'd joined up Nora and Sajid at their Beverly Hills apartment and we drove to the event together."

Cynthia Cedillo "Cece" Valdez, another friend of Nora's who sat at the table with the reunited stars, shared with us in an e-mail: "Sajid is special since he still always be a part of the Guy's career. I am not exactly sure how she and Sajid reconnected, but I was told a fan arranged the meeting and Sajid attended one of the Guy's concerts in LA. Their friendship blossomed again and I could only say they met again at the right time and the right place. They're helping each other like true friends should."

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Rolfew V. Nefuddet

"I had a chance to talk to him," Cece said of Sajid, who began acting as early as age 6 in "Mother India," which was nominated for the Academy Best Foreign Language Film in 1958. Nora said the late director Ishmael Bhargava flew to LA to direct "The Singing Pilipinx" with Sajid in 1975. "Sajid is very articulate and I can tell he has great respect for Ate Guy. He admits that in much. He still has that beautiful set of eyes. He may be different from the way he was some years ago, or should I say during their movie years ago, but he's still good looking. He's a little bit physically challenged these days after a hip surgery four, five years or so ago."

"Ate Guy and Sajid have great respect for each other," Cece added. "Being long-time friends, they're very comfortable with each other. They have no pretensions which made the guests around them feel at ease."

Sajid, not be confused with an Indian director of the same name, appeared in Hollywood films and TV shows. He was a teen idol in the US in the early '70s and graced such magazines as Tiger Beat and 16. Aside from "The

EMMA E.

CHEER FACTOR

Adam Lambert is 'Idol' mentor

NEW YORK—"American Idol" runner-up Adam Lambert will mentor the show's current crop of contestants next Tuesday and will perform his single "Whatever What Feels Me" on the following night's results show.

"Excited!" Lambert said on Twitter.

Reuters

www.letsfaceit-spalon.com

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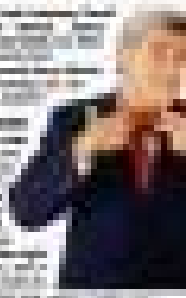
Jim, Jenny reveal breakup on Twitter

Martin and Baldwin, Lemo and Le



Nora reconnects with '70s screen partner Saj

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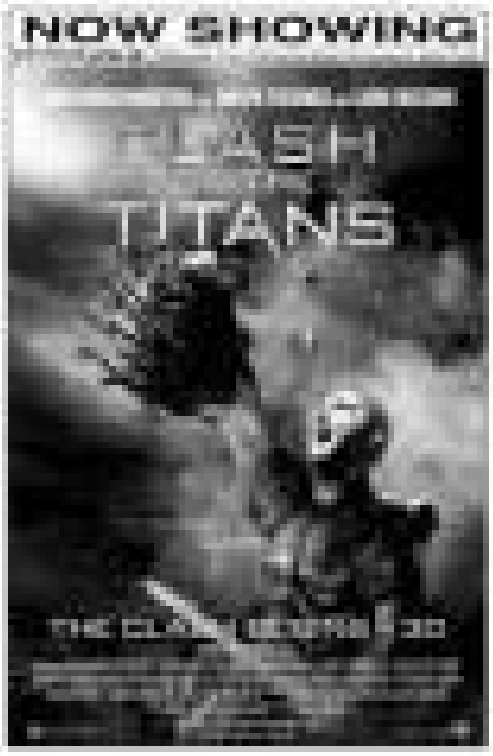

20 short films aim to show real issues in May polls

By Marinel R. Cruz

"WE WILL CHALLENGE THE 'X' rating and take it to the highest court," said ABS-CBN executive Maria Rosa of the MTRCB (Movie and Television Review and Classification Board) decision to ban two short films included in "Sinehyon 2010."

Brillante Mendoza's "Serbis Na" and Jeffrey Jeturian's "Tuhog Nga Siguro, Hanap sa Tuhog Bakasi" were given the "X" rating by the censors last week. This prohibits the films from being shown in theaters.

"Sinehyon 2010" is a collection of 20 short films produced by ABS-CBN/Star Cinema/Skylight, to show the real issues at stake in the coming elections.

"Pan [ening] rallied to amend the censor—freedom of expression," said Rosa, owner and current affairs department head.

"SINEHYON 2010" directors (from left): John Torres, Pam Miras, McRobert Hualda, Gym Gamboa, Anna Penaflel, Elmo Candino, Paolo Villaluna, Sunshine Maranan, Kivi Zabana, Jeffrey Jeturian, Henry Fregia, Ellen Ramos and Jade Castro. Back row: Jon Red, Emman Bello Cruz, Jarrold Tarog, Emerson Reyes, Raymond Red and Brillante Mendoza

RAYMOND RED

JEFFREY JETURIAN

NETWORK execs Glenda Gloria and Maria Rosa, proponents of the project, with Brillante Mendoza

Expected reaction

"I sort of expected the way the MTRCB reacted to my short film; the movie is critical of the administration," Jeturian said during the premiere screening of "Sinehyon 2010" Tuesday at the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Jeturian's film follows a day in the lives of three people who get to steal the government's share of contracts given to them by politicians, and his aim is to show whether the reported gains are felt by the common folk.

Mendoza's "Serbis Na" is a music video with lyrics that mainly contrast with images of poverty, prostitution, and drugs. Under the second review, "Serbis Na" received an "R" rating, restricting it to viewers 18 and above.

"What's surprising," said Jeturian, "was, the same materials were approved for airing on TV. I guess the judgment was really arbitrary."

The MTRCB is allowing the showing of Sinehyon 2010 only on ABS-CBN's Sine Class of the company's communications department said on Wednesday.

Arnold Tarog, director of "Sana Dati," said he was pleased that his work was included in the anthology. "This project is a first," he said. "Although I have to admit that, with the limited budget given to us, there's only so much we can do."

Tarog's "Serenity" is about two teachers with ears opposing approaches to education. "I asked for that subject [education] because I'm currently doing another full-length feature on the same subject. Smart's a veritable prospect," Tarog said.

A filmmaker's job

Pam Miras' "Ving Rang Ting Ting" is about war and violence, seen through the eyes of a child. "This omnibus is good because it involves the independent sector, the industry, the electronics," she said. "It's just sad that it will not be shown in more houses."

Jon Torres' work is titled "Bayan Hanain ng Pamilyang Guro Kasama ng Pag-Ibig, Pag-asa at mga Kaibigan Nito."

Said Torres, "I chose democracy for a topic because it's [education] and hopes must come for experimentation. It made me ask, 'What is democracy? Do we really need it?'"

Jade Castro, who made "I Think Also Multosexing Ang Bida Ko Eh Bah Ito," said, "I wanted to be part of Sinehyon 2010 because I'm a filmmaker who is also a Filipino. It's my job to tell stories ... to articulate what I know."

"I thought, if I could present the (issues) issues [and] struggles and personal choice in the context of the elections, that would be something," said Gino Gonzales, director of "Leaping Howitzers Bombay," about the 1,700-kilometer walk of 35 farmers from Bombay, Bulacan, to the Palace in Manila.

Torres added: "I think we all decided that we need something better. There's no way we can have change if we don't change the way we vote. It starts there. What we're trying to do ... is show the Filipinos a different way of seeing things, and who can deduct better than these directors."

Free screening

Also part of "Sinehyon 2010" are Eddie Garcia' "Hanap Buhay" Gym Gamboa's "Tatlo sa Isa," Sunshine Maranan's "Lihaqan," Mellodeen Ramirez's "Ang Anatomiya," Ellen Ramos' "Wanted: Jesus," Anna Penaflel's "Rabid Revenge."

Jon Red's "Pandirol, Gardunas at Gema," Raymond Red's "Pantas," Emerson Reyes' "Ang Sitwasyon sa Isaac at Lucresindia," Kivi Zabana's "Requiem for 30," Emman Bello Cruz' "Lara," Paolo Villaluna's "Wanted" and Rob Martel's "Da Movie Da Movie."

"Sinehyon 2010" will have a free public screening at the UP Film Institute tonight at 7. The five-part TV special on ABS-CBN starts tonight at 8 (Jose Mari Avelino, with cyclone footage at 8 p.m., starting tomorrow. It airs on Studio 23 starting April 12, 10:30 p.m.

See him up close—for ₱12,000

MY RIGHTS TO THE JOHN MAYER concert on May 14 at the SM Mall of Asia grounds are exorbitantly priced at ₱12,000—with a discounted rate of ₱10,000 being offered until April 15.

That's a half-month salary for the typical young professional who'd want to outdo the pop-rock singer-songwriter's first gig in the country.

The next best spot, the Gold section, in the parking lot-turned-concert venue that is the MOA open-air grounds, goes for ₱8,000 (a pop—discounted at ₱6,400 also until April 15).

For never-say-die fans who still insist on searching, but can only afford the (not-so-good) tickets, Showtime suggests they come early and be prepared to just sing on the music via the sound system. That's because the view coming from the Silver, Bronze and General Admission sections (all can be found on the ground) is no far for comfort lovers with video cameras), and aggravated by the presence of a huge true-sheet (stink it).

In any case, this is one show truly worth watching, if only to experience, in a live setting, the execution of Mayer's music from acoustic to blues-driven electric rock...which the 32-year-old artist admitted by listening to the legends, a few of whom (B.B. King, Buddy Guy and Eric Clapton) he has collaborated with.

It will be interesting to see how Jonathan only with Mayer's pop hits ("Your Body is a Wonderland," "Waiting on the World to Change," among others) discover why Rolling Stone magazine has no qualms calling "Gravity" "Guitar God"—even going as far as nicknaming him "Slowhand Jr." (after the senior Clapton).

The three-time Mayer fall-enemy are advised to check if he'll be bringing along drummer Steve Jordan, his soloist in the John Mayer Trio which opened for the Rolling Stones in 2008. Pschalis Concepcion

JOHN Santos

KELLY Clarkson

Jon Santos at Rockwell

Comedian Jon Santos brings his show "For Mine or For Mine?" to Power Plant Mall Cinema 2, Rockwell, Makati, on April 10, 23 and 28.

RAMMSTEIN

'Rock Overload'

Bamboo, Freebyu at Edgar and Kembauwe perform in a show dubbed "Rock Overload" on April 16, 9 p.m. at Skyvibes, 47 West Ave., Quezon City. Call 441-7220, 668-0121 or 775-4680.

Tonight

The Jerks at The Library. Call 431-2007 or 0921-2883793.

May 1

Kelly Clarkson, 8 p.m., Araneta Coliseum. Call 911-5555.

May 2

Tears for Fears, 8 p.m., Araneta Coliseum.

BEN Stiller in "Greenberg," as a guy passing as mid-life to find his warmth

Lesson learned for comedy star: You never go full retard

BEN STILLER WITH HIS FRAME-hungry actor learned in "Tropic Thunder" was that "you never go full retard!" when playing a simpleton in hopes of earning an Academy Award.

Stiller himself goes full outcast, or was enough, in "Greenberg," and while the results won't earn him an Oscar, it earned our pressy-well.

As the title character, a guy passing as mid-life to find his warmth, Ben Stiller managed quite a nicer performance.

Rather than the silly, caricatured buffoons on which Stiller made his fortune, in "Greenberg" he plays a true flesh-and, a man with deep emotional issues, a backpack full of guilt and a bushel of regrets. Here's a man whose marriage self-destructed, will dead-end and self-loathing often make him unpleasant to be around...so the fact that he's still an engaging character is a testament to the fine line Stiller manages to walk.

Breakout role

Stiller is paired to great effect with Greta Gerwig in a breakout role as an aspiring musician with her own self-esteem issues, a woman who kind of falls for Greenberg, despite his all-passing demeanor.

The film marks a nice rebound for director Noah Baumbach, who made the heartbreaking divorce portrait "The Squid and the Whale." then stumbled with the soapy phony sibling drama "Margot at the Wedding."

With a story Baumbach developed with producer, co-star and real-life wife Jennifer Jason Leigh, "Greenberg" is a perceptive look at coming to terms with, if not entirely embracing, the life you weren't expecting and by no means wanted.

Stiller's Roger Greenberg is a man whose own musical ambitions led nowhere. Now a seemingly successful carpenter in New York City, Roger is fresh out of a mental hospital after a nervous breakdown, and he heads home to Los Angeles to crash at his brother's place while sibling and family are vacationing in Vietnam.

There he meets Florence and Roger (might be kindred spirits only in the sense that she's a sweet, fitful dreamer always in search of a good swing-by, while he's an often nasty guy with big, lonely hearts.

Leigh, one of the leads in "Margot at the Wedding," turns up best for only a couple of sweetly scenes.

Baumbach again creates dreamy, off-beat and at times uncomfortable, Roger continually spoiling things with a mean mouth that doesn't seem linked to either his brain or his heart.

Florence and Roger